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FREDERIC·W·GOUDY·EDITOR

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THIS ISSUE OF ARS TYPOGRAPHICA IS DEDICATED
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VOLUME I AUTUMN, 1934 NUMBER 4

TYPE DESIGN

A HOMILY

I. The Force of Tradition · II. Type, What It Is
III. The Technique of Type Engraving

BY FREDERIC W. GOUDY

I · The Force of Tradition

THE FONTS OF GARAMOND, BODONI, DIDOT, CASLON, BASKERVILLE and other well known faces [or type founders' imitations of them], have been available for years to printers generally, and, no doubt, practically any piece of printing required can be done adequately and satisfactorily with one or another of them, old as they are. It is no less true, however, that the wearing apparel of the citizen of Shakespeare's time was adequate and suited to his times, and might, so far as practicality is concerned, be just as suitable for our own. But there is the matter of "style" to consider, and just as in the matter of clothes, styles in types change capriciously.

Printers, nevertheless, have been loyal to the masterpieces of those early craftsmen and have hesitated to heed seriously the experiments of modern designers of types. But why carry loyalty to the point of entire disregard of *possible* equally meritorious newer designs? Is it true, as has been said, that designers are, at the best, mere amateurs and their art comparatively a humble one? I do not hold to this theory.

The type designer is no mere amateur. The amateur is concerned mainly with questions of esthetics, the professional is concerned with the problem of a livelihood;—the type designer must attempt to solve successfully both problems. It is true that type design as a separate vocation is practiced by few independent craftsmen, because hitherto, for such work, there has been offered too little remuneration to attract artists capable of original effort.

While there is just now a greater interest in the design of types than ever, there seems also to be a concerted movement by many printers to use letter forms which plainly show that the designers of them have chosen to disregard or override [unwisely] the best traditions of the type designers' art. For myself I firmly believe that the best types for our use must be newer letter-forms based on the shapes fixed by tradition—fresh expressions in which new life and vigor have been infused, creating new types characterized by severe restraint and which will exhibit a poise and reposeful quality that is ever delightful. But I am asked, just what do we mean by "tradition"—just what is "tradition" that we should bow servilely to it?

The need or demand for a new or useful thing brings, first, careful consideration for its construction and its material as determined by its destination, & second, a desire for its ornamentation, both construction and ornament reaching com-

parative perfection only after slow and gradual evolution.

The *choice* of details exercised by a worker with fine and delicate perceptions will endow with a special beauty any work of utility he touches; a vulgar workman can never decorate because his perceptions are vicious and his choice and selection of details are erroneous. The artist expresses himself in the choice he makes.

An ornamental form once found delightful invites repetition; it is handed on from generation to generation, until finally, firmly established by use, it has become a traditional form. Tradition itself, however, is merely the ladder by which we climb, the working hypothesis that saves us from despair, because it is all we have to go upon. If we obey tradition, even though our efforts at first are crude and archaic, our work will rest upon a firm foundation.

Almost always early ornamental forms were symbolic; while their original significance might later be overlooked or forgotten, frequently with loss of much of their interest or character, there still remain of them today the abstract developments whose dignity or simple beauty will enhance the appearance of the thing adorned.

There was a time when the artist was both artist & craftsman, himself the executor of the things his genius created. His imagination and handicraft were largely occupied with devising and making more beautiful the necessary implements of every day life. His imagination developed with increased and varied experience; the technical difficulties he met and their mastery led to the selection of certain tools and methods which he found best adapted to the work in hand, and inevitably brought about the formation of noble and lasting traditions. I do not mean by this that tradition is a mere collection of cut-and-dried rules or precepts by which we are

to work; on the contrary, tradition is a storehouse of delight, a granary of the heaped-up knowledge of tried methods and improved processes that have developed and will go on developing in the future as in the past. Indeed, tradition goes on and on, always progressing, occasionally retrogressing, but never unbroken. Traditions of art & craft are lost only when the traditions of humanity are neglected and the significance of its traditions despised.

While rules and precepts show beginners what others have found it wise to do, tradition itself goes more deeply into the very principles of art and life. The aim of art is to make a useful thing beautiful as well as useful; tradition not only teaches the best way that has been found to do it, it shows too, the metes and bounds of man's endeavor reached at the moment, the walled boundaries within which the imagination of the craftsman may have full sway. His work, nevertheless, need not be dull or uninspired because seemingly restrained. A wholesome respect for the thought and effort that has brought about a tradition will go far to prevent the perpetration of eccentric solecisms.

Tradition invites spontaneous excursions of individual taste and fancy within her *established* limits, yet leaves the artist free to attempt consistent, reasoned and dignified essays to enlarge her borders. Since no one man can possibly exploit the whole of the treasures brought to light, others who follow his footsteps will find ample room to exercise all the originality of which they are capable. It is in the fire of research and study, link by link, that the chain of tradition is forged.

Just as "a language," said Bishop Trench, "will often be wiser, not merely than the vulgar, but even than the wisest of those who speak it," so a tradition which has embalmed and preserved the thoughts and experiments of generations of

workers, must be superior to the efforts of beginners in a craft or of those ignorant or disdainful of her knowledge.

The beginnings of any handicraft took note at first, only of pleasing utility; advancing, however, from simple to more complex requirements, more ideas to express, greater subtleties of design and invention appear, until finally the tradition of that craft has reached us adorned and enriched for our use. Yet tradition is not to be followed solely for its own sake; the logical framework of a craft, the general rules that control it, these with all the acquisitions of thought, feeling and experience, are ours to carry forward by new essays, and the additions we make will enlarge the legacy of tradition which we may bequeath to those who follow us, just as we inherit and use the traditions that have come down to us; we benefit by the labor of the skilled artisans who have blazed the way; in our hands is the key with which to unlock those ancient storehouses with their accumulated treasures, the gold of truth dug from the mines of the past. To accept mediaeval tradition, however, without adding something of ourselves to it is mere affectation; "it is no longer tradition if it be servilely copied, without change, the token of life." The dogmas of tradition therefore, are flexible and are to be enforced lightly that they do not wholly imprison us.

Genius is the expression of a strong individuality, and extends the limits of tradition instead of attempting to invent new a one. Genius cultivates old fields in new ways. While a designer of strong artistic personality may modify the laws of tradition more or less according to his strength and ability, he is, nevertheless, seldom free from its influence; and in fact, few great artists have ever become great by deliberately disregarding tradition. Once in a blue moon an individual designer with more taste and feeling than ordinary

will rise above the accepted standards of tradition and distinguish himself by his personal choice and unusual treatment of details, by some new thought or method, or a fresh sentiment or point of view; his fertile imagination finds new expressions for new feelings and thereby his work marks a new epoch in art.

Happily the imaginative faculty is not confined to the few, since, in some degree, it belongs to all, a common heritage that grows with use. A sound tradition directs the imagination and confines it safely within the bounds of reason. On the other hand, original and creative invention of high order is a form of imagination that unfortunately belongs comparatively to few workers.

Memories of beautiful things that at some time have deeply stirred our admiration are the seeds from which invention springs; in the granary of the mind are stored up broad impressions to be created into new forms whose splendor or poverty is determined by one's mental strength and ability. Invention demands that we soar above mere caprices of fashion.

Years ago in an article on "Style in the Composition of Type" Mr. Updike said that "style in printing does not permanently reside in any one manner of work, but on those principles on which almost all manners of work may be based." This, to my mind, is only another way of saying that tradition is a safe basis upon which to work—for a good tradition is the ultimate result of the application of fundamental principles. The recognition & successful application of those principles has been the mark of all the great printers and type designers of the past as it must be of all those of the future. Types may present an appearance of novelty without necessarily losing the grace of tradition.

The practical business of an artist may be in the practise of but one particular craft, but unless his interest is concerned with the whole diapason of art, he will fall short of attaining the fullest ideals of his own. If he would express in his work a vivacity, charm, invention, grace and an interesting variety, he must cultivate a fine taste and a liberal spirit by a study of the masterpieces of all the arts. He will thus gain a breadth & depth of vision, an insight into fundamental principles, and the courage to face technical difficulties. He must learn, however, not to imitate masterpieces, but rather to follow the traditions on which masterpieces are reared. Tradition, we see then, is a matter of environment and of intellectual atmosphere. The continuous efforts of generations of cunning workers along one line led naturally to the accumulation of knowledge, increased ability to design and greater manual dexterity, so that certain ways of doing things have come to be recognized as the best ways to accomplish a desired result. Therefore, it is only by following good and tried traditions that craftsmanship of the highest order can come.

II · Type: What It Is

"Printing—'that most noble of the Mechanick Arts, being that to which Letters and Science hath given the Precision and Durability of the printed Page'—was invented in response to a growing demand for speed."

SOME one has said that "the moment that marked the liberation of words from the limitations of the mediaeval scribes marked also the beginning of modern civilization," the moment being, of course, the invention of movable types. In the type-founders' craft, the moment that marked the elimination of the founders' punch and introduced the machine-cut matrix, marked too, in a way, the severance of the connection that existed hitherto between artist and artisan, that intimate

relation which should exist in all art that creates useful things and makes them pleasing by appropriate decoration.

The immediate predecessors of type—the manuscript letters of mediaeval times—were shaped for easy reading. The first types followed them in form, but because of technical and mechanical limitations they had first to be simplified to meet the exigencies of use, but not, however, at the expense of legibility or beauty. Although the first types were based on the scribe's writing, probably with the intention of deceiving readers into the belief they were manuscript, or at any rate, to furnish type forms similar to the written letter forms with which readers already were familiar, the type forms themselves gradually drew away from their models as printers discovered that one shape was as easy to cut and found [and print] as another. Later, to conserve space, types were often unduly compressed and reduced, thereby losing much of the beauty that at first was the great desideratum.

Manuscripts were, in many respects, rivals of the early printing as well as its type models; in fact, printing was simply another method of writing, differing in means only. Printers often insisted that their work was indistinguishable from MS. or superior to it. In Paris, it is said, the first printed books which reached that city were actually passed off as MSS. The scribe's letter that furnished the model of the desired type to be cut in metal did not always exhibit the expected and wished-for beauty in the type itself because the metal workers who undertook to draw the letter, cut punches and fit matrices were not always equal to the task. As type cutting was a new craft, there were no precedents to follow, no traditions to direct their efforts; they created their own precedents. It was only when types were produced by craftsmen who were artists also, workers who appreciated the subtle-

ties of letter forms, and who gave intelligent supervision to every stage of type founding and letter cutting, that types began to display a beauty and character of their own.

The perfect model for a type letter is altogether imaginary, there is no copy for the designer today save that form created by some former artist, and the excellence of a designer's work depends entirely upon the degree of *imagination* and *feeling* he can include in his rendition of that traditional form.

Just as the scribe's writing was adapted from the early lapidary letters, simplified by dropping everything difficult to shape easily with the pen and yet retain the essential letter forms, so types are the materialized letters of the scribes, i.e. handwriting divested of the scribe's vagaries and whimsicalities, conceived as forms to be cut in metal, and needing only to be simplified and formalized to meet the new and enlarged conditions of use. It is regrettable, perhaps, that our first types should have followed those written letters so closely in form. Suppose instead they had followed the earlier Greek designs. In that event our lower case letters, no doubt, would probably be of more gracious line, their parts in more perfect proportion and contrast, & quite possibly show less of the crude and barbarous angularity which they now exhibit. On the other hand they do show a robust strength and virility and character that makes them more legible and interesting than they might otherwise be had they been derived from a purer and more beautiful archetype.

Although letters are the individual signs that compose the alphabet, each one signifying primarily but one thing—what letter it is, and beyond which, until joined with other letters to form words and sentences it has no significance, they do have, in addition to the main purpose of making thought visible, a decorative quality as a whole quite aside from any orna-

mental treatment of the separate characters or their arrangement, a quality that constitutes the graphic art itself. This decorative quality intimately concerns the type designer and is the outcome of feeling rather than the result of any conscious effort to attain it.

But form alone is not enough; type must show life and power—i.e. expression. Many types have correct enough forms, yet lack entirely that vibrant quality of life and vigor which comes naturally from the hand of a craftsman who is intent on personal expression and is not merely attempting to display his draughtsmanship or striving for an exact and precise finish.

Types, too, must have character—but in what does type character consist? A writer in a recent magazine article has said that "imperfections are the foundation of a type design's character." My own belief is that if a design has character, it is in spite of its imperfections, not because of them. There is a wide gap between freedom of drawing with natural irregularities of execution, and imperfections per se. No, character is not gained by imperfections of handling or eccentricities of form or bizarre details. Then how is it attained? Is it something gotten by conscious effort, or is it rather a by-product of the designer's own individuality or personality,—something he doesn't deliberately and consciously strive for, or is it, rather, some innate thing which is in his work because of his unique personality?

For myself I believe type character is the outcome of a sincere attempt by the designer to fashion his letters upon a sound tradition, and then to add such subtleties in the handling of his lines and curves as are within his ability and power, qualities which are unconsciously produced in his drawing and controlled by his innate good taste and feeling

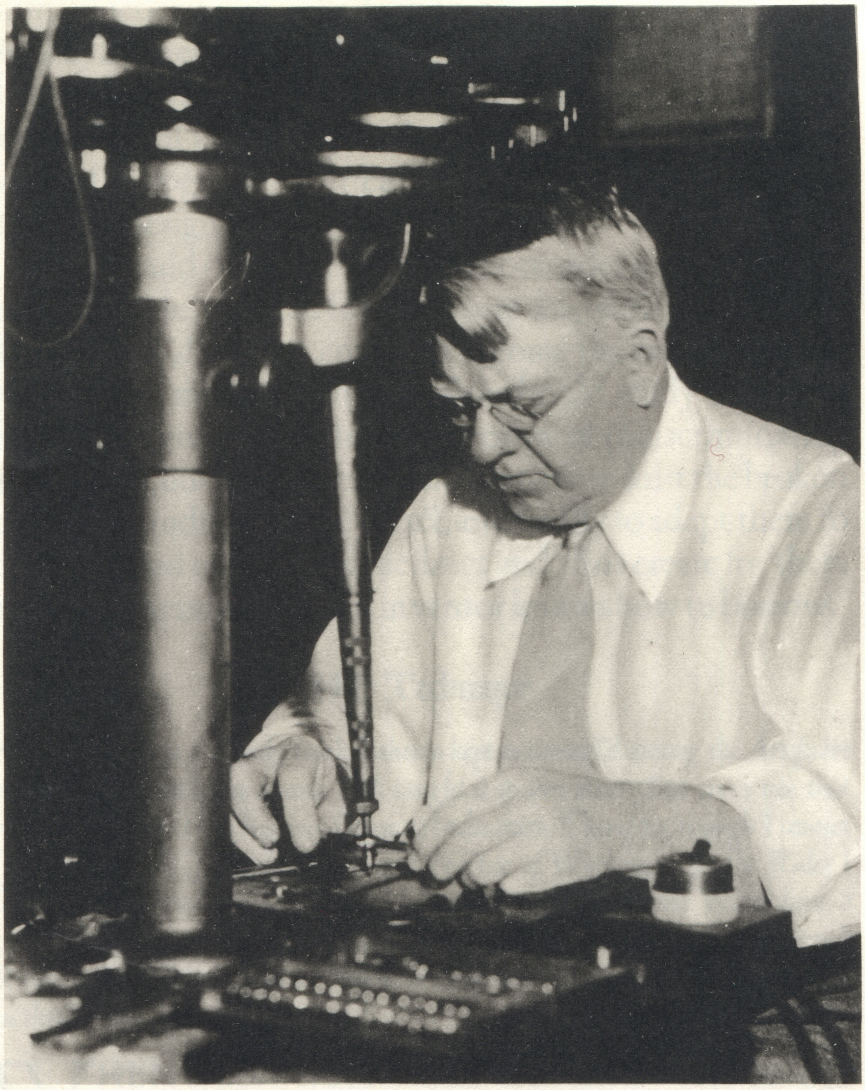
and imagination. Character in types has to do with the impression made by the individual forms, their proportions, and the intangible something in them that makes the letters of each word hang together to form an agreeable whole; each letter with a quality of completeness, and not made up of bits taken here and there, each a shape with an air of its own—its graces not too obvious, and withal no affectation of antiquity. When technical conditions are fully understood, frankly acknowledged and fairly complied with, a long stride toward character will have been made.

When a type design is good it is not because each individual letter of the alphabet is perfect in form, but because there is a feeling of harmony and unbroken rhythm that runs through the whole design, each letter kin to every other and to all.

One writer speaking of modern type design says, "It is doubtful whether the type designer benefits from a close study of hand lettering," meaning of course a study of the MS. hands of the past. For myself, in the main I am inclined to agree with him. I do find manuscript letters intensely interesting, but at the same time only occasionally do they suggest new type expressions to me. As a general thing I prefer to get my suggestions from a study of the earlier types that appeal to me, realizing of course that the types which I admire most quite probably were inspired by the very MS. hands that I personally do not find of much use in my own work. With complete independence of calligraphy I attempt to secure, rather, the negative quality of unpretentiousness, and strive for the pure contour & monumental character of the classic Roman letters in the spirit of the best traditions, and avoid, as far as I am able, any fantastic quality or any exhibition of self-conscious preciosity.

My friend, Stanley Morison, has said, "The good type-designer knows that, for a new fount to be successful, it has to be so good that only very few recognize its novelty. If readers do not notice the consummate reticence and rare discipline of a new type it is probably a good letter. But if my friends think that the tail of my lower-case 'r' or the lip of my lower-case 'e' is rather jolly, you may know that the fount would have been better had neither been made." I am not sure that I accept his dictum completely, but inversely I have often said that when one friend or critic has found fault with the tail of an 'r' or the lip of an 'e' of one of my own types I have scarcely considered the criticism, but if a number of critics fixed on the same points, I should be inclined carefully to reconsider my drawing. If the tail of one of my 'r's should prove "rather jolly" I would not kill it because of that fact, provided it took its harmonious place in the font and did not invite undue attention because of its jollity.

It is hardly possible to create a good type face which will differ radically from the established forms of the past, nevertheless it is still possible to secure new expressions of life and vigor. The types in daily use, almost without exception, betray too fully the evidences of their origin, and do not always follow the best traditions. It requires the skilled hand, the appreciation and taste of the artist and the trained mind of the student to select suitable models which may be adapted to our use and to which we may give new graces suited to our times. As for myself, I have made designs that reverted for their inspiration to the lapidary characters of the early Romans; others that were based on the classic types of Jenson, Ratdolt, Aldus, etc.; still others that were suggested by the scribe's hands which were also the source of the types of those masters; and now, in the Autumn of my labors, I draw



FREDERIC W. GOUDY
The Editor at the Matrix Engraving Machine

with practically no reference to any of the sources mentioned, but rely largely on the broad impressions of early forms stored up by years of study and practice, and governed by a technical knowledge of the requirements of type founding and typography, I attempt to create those impressions into new designs of beauty and utility.

We should study the early types in order to know them, to increase the material for our future use, or even copy them if we do not allow our copies to become the end desired, instead of the means to an end. We should study them, not merely to revive or imitate them because of indiscriminating admiration, but study them to enable us to re-knit the broken threads of tradition, there intact, and finally to adapt them to our increased mechanical facilities and thus create for them a wider currency. "Only an inventor knows how to borrow."

III · Technique

"Letter-cutting is a Handy-work hitherto kept so conceal'd among the Artificers of it, that I cannot learn anyone hath taught it to any other; But every one that has used it, Learnt it of his own Genuine Inclination. Therefore, though I cannot (as in other trades) describe the general Practice of Work-men, yet the Rules I follow I shall shew here.... For, indeed, by the appearance of some Work done, a judicious Eye may doubt whether they go by any Rule at all, though Geometrick Rules, in no Practice whatever, ought to be more nicely or exactly observed than in this." [MOXON, 1683]

WHEN types were first made each letter was fashioned by hand as a raised form, on the end of a steel rod; after numerous trial proofs taken from the engraved letter and found satisfactory, the rod was hardened. It then became a punch which could be struck into a bar of copper. When the face of the sunken letter was made parallel with the surface of the copper at the correct depth, the sides of the copper

dressed truly at right angles to the face and at equal distances from the sunken letter, the copper drive became a matrix in which a type could be cast. The excellence of the punch-cutter's work depended on the skill with which he executed this part of his business; & his whole artistic ability was devoted to an effort to render the letter-punch as perfect a reproduction of his original conception as possible. In almost every instance, the early designer of the best letters was also the cutter of the punches from which the matrices were driven and the print from the type cast therein was so closely connected with the original design that the handicraft of the workman was still strongly felt in the typography of the page.

In modern type founding there are so many stages between the artist's original drawings and the types made from them that the page becomes impersonal—the artist's feeling is gradually lost sight of in the handling of the various details by the different workmen who actually carry out the processes of type production, but who cannot, naturally, know or feel what the artist had in mind.

Because a type design has been cut slowly by hand it does not necessarily follow that it is a good type, nor that one which is reproduced rapidly or more accurately by machine is necessarily a bad one. The method of reproduction is important only as it effects the quality of the thing made & the happiness of the maker and the user of it. That workman is happiest who is able to impress his own feeling on what he is making; that user, who is able to appreciate the degree of imagination and invention that has gone into the thing made. The danger is in allowing the facility of the machine to blind us somewhat to the importance of imagination & invention, and to permit the machine's monotonous tyranny to undermine and reduce our capacity for creation.



BERTHA M. GOUDY
She has just finished setting "Frankenstein"

Nowadays punch cutting in a type foundry [I am speaking of American foundries] is practically non-existent, but the Monotype, Linotype and other type composition machines utilize machine-cut punches generally. A punch cut by mechanical means may still be a perfect facsimile of the artist's drawings and retain in every detail his irregularities of handling, his feeling [and eccentricities]—*if the pattern letter from which the punch is engraved is also made by the designer of the fount*, a practice, I fear, not generally followed. No pattern of a letter from an artist's drawing but made by another hand can present the same feeling of life and spontaneity as one made by the artist himself. Ruskin said in *The Nature of Gothic* that "one man's thoughts can never be expressed by another: and the difference between the spirit of touch of the man who is inventing, and of the man who is obeying directions, is often all the difference between a great and a common work of art." The machine itself may be hard and uncompromising, but its product is entirely within the control of the pattern—if the pattern is right, then the more accurate and precise the machine, the more perfect the *reproduction* of the designer's art. I cannot agree entirely with my friend Mr. Bruce Rogers that "It is difficult for the habitual user of a very accurate machine *not* insensibly to smooth out what he has always been taught to consider 'imperfections' and to make mechanically as perfect a letter as is possible. . . . I have come to believe that perhaps only hand-cut punches, cut by the designer of the type, can preserve the real feeling of the design." If he had suggested that the artist himself make the *pattern* letters from the original drawings or carry through the various steps from design to matrix, whether driven or otherwise, I would agree heartily with him from sore experience. The "smoothing out" must be done in the pattern before it

reaches the operator, & I do not see how even an experienced and competent operator of an engraving machine can vary his work materially unless he deliberately and of his own volition fails to do or does differently what he is expected to do and is paid to do—to follow most minutely every deviation of his pattern letter. I speak as an operator of some experience, having, personally, cut hundreds of matrices.

We do not design by machinery—design is the artist's creation, which, when necessary, may be exactly *reproduced* by machine; obviously, quite a different thing.

My friend, Mr. Carl P. Rollins of Yale University Press, says, "It seems to me that good type must, in the first case be well-designed... that it must be well-cut; that is, the punches *must* be cut by hand, because only in that way can the meritorious and human qualities of the design be preserved." But he goes on with the [to me] astounding statement that "I realize that this means that the type will *not* be a perfect replica of the designer's pattern; but this is an essential of good type —that it be not mechanical." He says, in other words, that the vagaries of the punch cutter are more desirable than the designer's art. Then why the designer or his drawings? Is the punch cutter necessarily a good designer?

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the artist's pattern design is good & the cutter of the punch, cutting "by hand," varies from it—his rendering is not then a perfect replica of the artist's drawing; but is it necessarily as good or better than the designer's conception simply because it has been cut by hand? Suppose, on the other hand, that the designer's patterns or drawings do exhibit those "meritorious and human qualities of design" Mr. Rollins refers to; does it matter *how* the type is produced if those same qualities are exhibited in the print from the type made from those drawings? If Mr.

Rollins had intimated as Mr. Rogers does that the designer should also be the punch-cutter then I would go along with him at least part of the way. But I can from experience assert that no designer and punch-cutter can ever work together in such perfect accord that the resulting types will be a perfect replica of the designer's drawings; they will undoubtedly lack some quality or subtlety of the artist's original conception, and express less of his intention and feeling; they will probably show the punch-cutter's skill [or lack of it].

To make his type "not mechanical" by hand cutting may be too great a price to pay if some of the important quality of design is sacrificed in the rendition of it. The mere revival of handicraft is not all that is necessary to redeem art.

Nowadays, instead of using punches from which to drive matrices, the general type foundry practice is to engrave matrices direct,[1] using an intaglio or sunken pattern. This pattern may be produced in several ways, different users of them preferring one method or another usually devised by themselves; and I only undertake here to speak more or less definitely of the method which I personally employ in my own work. All that I have said heretofore regarding patterns from which to cut punches applies equally to these intaglio patterns used for cutting matrices.

True, I am a type cutter and founder of such recent entry into a field not now over-crowded [having begun my work after my sixtieth birthday] that to attempt any dogmatic assertions or criticism of other's methods would be an impertinence; yet I cannot refrain here from becoming somewhat personal regarding my own practice, which is, after all, a seri-

[1] When matrices are cut direct the types cast from them usually require subsequent "dressing" to remove the overhang due to the necessary bevel of the engraving cutter, unless the type is cast in machines provided with knives to trim off the overhanging parts.

ous attempt on my part to bring back "the intimate relation that hitherto existed between artist and artisan," and which must be my excuse for presuming to present it.

In producing my types I first make drawings usually nine inches high, from which, by a method of my own, I make intaglio patterns the same size as these original drawings. These patterns are cut entirely freehand and as carefully as may be. Occasionally I amend a pattern itself in some slight detail because a later thought, or possibly the actual construction of the letter itself, while fashioning the pattern, has suggested some fancied improvement or subtlety not in the original. When this large model letter or pattern finally satisfies me it is *mechanically* reproduced in every detail in metal by engraving it in reduced size [for my own use to two and one-half inches] on a pantographic router, capable of minute adjustment, and this reduced facsimile engraving becomes the working pattern from which in still another machine the matrix is cut. Since my pattern is produced entirely by hand it contains, no doubt, any "meritorious and human qualities" there may be in my original design, and these qualities are reproduced just as precisely in the resulting matrix as ever they were secured in any matrix driven from a hand-cut punch.

The working pattern I employ exhibits in all exactness every irregularity, every subtlety of curve, every line as straight and precise as necessary, or as free and full of life and vitality, as the original large drawing. And I maintain, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Updike, Mr. Rollins to the contrary notwithstanding, that my machines, carefully handled, will actually reproduce and retain in the patterns and matrices *all* the feeling that I have put into my original drawings [whether they are good or bad type design is entirely beside the point]; the machines are then my tools, no less so than the files and gravers and

scorpers in the hands of the ancient craftsman working by hand on the end of his steel. He could cut no truer curve, no sharper corner, no more workable bevel than I with my machines.

Mr. van Krimpen, the distinguished Dutch type designer, says "punch-cutting itself will always be a matter of strictly individual craftsmanship," and, may I add, what he says regarding punch-cutting is true also of matrix-engraving.

Technique and design are too frequently confounded with mere accidental infelicities of handling. In his excellent *Printing Types* [Volume I, page 12] Mr. Updike says "I have sometimes questioned whether a machine can be so managed that it will ever produce those fine and almost imperceptible qualities of design given to it by the hand of a *clever type-cutter*—which mean so much to the appearance of type in the mass, . . ." [The italics are mine.] I fear Mr. Updike is giving to the "clever type-cutter" credit for more artistic ability, greater facility of design, a greater knowledge of traditional forms than usually he merits. My acquaintance with the work of many of them inclines me to question the entire accuracy of Mr. Updike's statement. If the "fine and almost imperceptible qualities of design" are included in the designer's pattern they also should show in the type cut from them.

By the very exigencies of his craft the print from different sizes of the same design of the types of the early punch-cutter usually showed more variations than is the case today, since, working largely by eye and with few instruments for precise measurement, he had no way of exactly duplicating the design and proportions of each letter in every size, and except for a close resemblance, the same letters in different sizes usually varied somewhat: why need we consider such variations from the actual design necessarily meritorious?

Early types, more often than not, were mere imitations of some MS. hand that the printer admired. The punch-cutter, I fancy, made no preliminary drawings from which to work, or possibly made mere sketches only; he trusted to his sense of feeling, and taste, and proportion as he worked his steel, and the character of his tools & the cutting quality of the metal used had much to do with the final production. If he was an artist first, so much better would be the type produced.

Examine carefully the types attributed to Claude Garamond. When he struck his punch for the italic capital letter 'I' so that it inclined slightly more than the stems of his cap 'H' in one size and slightly less so in another size, or some irregularity in other letters such as slightly varying heights, etc., they probably do produce a certain variety in the face, but I cannot believe these different inclinations or irregularities were made deliberately by him; I imagine he felt that such differences were not material, since they did not necessarily mean a serious departure from the actual design of the character, instead, rather to be regarded as a technical shortcoming & accepted as a matter of course. Many of his letters show irregularities, not of design but of execution, variations which unthinking critics often mistake for genius in design, although in reality they are the accidents and not the intents of type founding.

Jenson's beautiful "white letter," which I regard as the finest and probably the first pure Roman type form, the inspiration for the best of the Roman types used today, might not have been so beautiful if it had been cut for his use by another's hand and not by his own, as was quite likely, since he was for years a metal worker in the French mint at Tours before he took up the work of printing.

The ideal or typical curve or movement in a letter must

not be *mathematically* produced in the drawing, because mathematical accuracy is not a common quality of such curves; but this is not to say that the original drawing which may be inaccurate in the same sense that objects in nature are inaccurate, therefore alive and varied and full of movement, should not be *reproduced* accurately by mechanical means into a metal pattern.

The engraving machine enables me to translate my original designs or drawings into matrices in shorter time than would otherwise be possible. I do not believe that merely by looking at the impression of any piece of type matter, anyone can say truly whether the type itself was cast in a matrix engraved mechanically or cast in one driven from a punch cut by hand. The important thing to know is where the work of the hand should end and that of the machine begin, and especially to see that the facility of the machine does not tend to usurp or displace any of the important functions of creation and representation.

And the final test of a type is that it expresses the spirit in which the original design was created, its appearance in actual use is more important than any quibble over the method of its translation into the vehicle of thought—its beauty or legibility is determined by the eye and is not a matter of the method employed for its reproduction.

✦

TYPE FOUNDING is not like other arts, in which imperfect workmanship may find a use proportionate to its relative value. Printing should tolerate no type that is bad, nor even that which is mediocre, since it costs as much to found & print bad types as it does to found & print perfect ones.

—Fournier.

BAD design cannot be retrieved by founder or printer; the designer's shortcomings are perpetuated without recourse & typography itself dishonored.

The Love of Books

A Letter to Frank Hopkins on the Subject from his Friend

BLISS CARMAN

BOOK-LOVING *is a malady like any other kind of loving. And like all maladies it is apt to rage with intermittent fury over a continent. No age is exempt from it, though it is apt to be most virulent between seventeen and twenty-five. If a man reaches the latter age safely, he may very possibly have only a few passing symptoms of the disease. If it continues without abatement until past thirty, it is nearly always fatal. The patient's only hope of recovery is a few years' residence in one of our great centers of civilization like New York or Chicago.*

The love of first-editions, however, is a very much more serious matter. It is a chronic disease, and once contracted can never be shaken off, but drives its poor victim to a haunted and often unholy death. It is a sort of jaundice of taste, a paresis of appreciation. Its terrible signs are only too well known. And I count that man happy who can pass a second hand book-shop, or a gorgeous palace of seduction like Charles Scribner's, without a twinge and with his full forty years on his shoulders. Listen to me! If you want to despoil your manhood of its last traces of perishing freedom, just subject it to the libro-malarial influence of some fine old book-wormery like Boston. The attack will be insidious and almost painless at first. But it will grow. You will never recover.

I contracted my own case there. Thank heaven, it is very mild as yet; but I can see it looming up in the future to destroy my intellect and overthrow all my fortunes.

Mr. Augustine Birrell, if I remember right, in speaking of Matthew Arnold, said that he was peculiarly free from this sort of thing. He liked all good things to be common and wide spread. The best was good enough for him. He could not understand why any of his own first editions should bring fabulous prices. Now that is just the way I feel. "The best is good enough for me." I care nothing at all for first editions of Poe or Hawthorne or any of the rare treasures. If I had them I would part with them tomorrow for a cold bottle and a small bird. And I would rather have my own fat, red, worn, marked, stained, weathered edition of Emerson's Essays,

two volumes in one, printed by Macmillan in 1882 *or* 1883, *than all the first editions that ever came out of Concord. It is* my *book, soiled by my own hands, and soaked in my own canoe, and read a June morning in my own tent.*

And then I have no foolish delusions about my own squitterings. I would rather see my own books (if I had more than one) in the second edition than the first; or in the seventh or the seventeenth or the any-eth edition, so long as the plates would hang together and look like print at all.

"I like good things to be common and wide spread."

And yet there are some first editions that I care for; the works of my friends, the young fellows, books I have helped to discover, or have at least discovered for myself before their authors became known; and even books that will never be widely appreciated.

Books like Pierre and His People, A Roadside Harp, *The Van Bibber Stories,* The Bird-Bride *by Graham R. Tomson, Miss Gertrude Hall's verses, Mr. Davidson's* Ballads & Songs, *and that incomparable book of short stories by* Q. Naughts and Crosses (*if I could only get hold of it*)—*these are all dear to my deluded soul. It pleases my vanity to treasure a book like* Lyrics and Ballads *by Mrs. Woods (Bentley* 1889) *because it seems to me full of good poetry and has never been widely known. It makes me feel like a scornful superior critic to own it and to read it to my suffering friends. And then there is always the added virtue in first editions of this kind, one can always get duplicates of them to give away. It is a much more refined form of mental decrepitude, this, to cherish what is accounted of little value. The great and costly delights of the common bibliophile are gross and Philistine in comparison with this intimate personal weakness. Do you not agree with me?*

Bliss Carman.

The First Censorship

The first attempt to restrict the freedom of printing was made by Berthold, Archbishop of Mentz, and Count of Henneburg, in 1464. He forbade priests and laymen to translate or publish any book in German without ecclesiastical sanction. The penalty was excommunication and confiscation of the books, and a fine of one hundred florins.

DE ORTU TYPOGRAPHIAE

GUTENBERG v. COSTER

BY WILLIAM BLADES

COSTER of Haarlem the inventor of printing? 'Tis a mere figment born of national vanity. There is not an atom of real evidence to prove that a man named *Coster* ever existed as a printer. "Stat nominus Umbra," and very shady is the whole story, being nothing more than empty theory, supported by phrases such as "in all probability"—"irresistible deduction"—"must have been," and similar empty words which sound big to the ear, but which all added together equal zero. Applying the usual laws of evidence to the arguments of Costerians, there is simply "no case." The evidence of the "Cologne Chronicle" is twisted and strained to support the claims of Holland. The writer of that work had no idea that his words would in future ages become a battlefield for nations, or he would have taken good care to have made himself better acquainted with the early chronology of the art. Costerians admit that he is wrong in his account of the towns to which the art was first taken; why then do they insist so strongly on his verbal accuracy just where it tells in their favor?

It is now admitted that on each side various documents have been forged or falsified. More's the pity, for they have confused and mystified the question greatly. Mr. Hessels says that "in the case of Gutenberg far more forgeries have been perpetrated than in that of the Haarlem inventor." But supposing this absurd dictum to be true [which it is not], the character of such forgeries is very different in the two cases. On the one side they are unimportant as regards the invention—on the other vital. The false documents concocted by Bodmann, the Archeviste of Strasbourg, and others, in the Gutenberg interest, concern points of family history only, with scarcely the remotest interest typographically. They would add materials, if true, to his biography, but would not add an iota to his claim to be the first printer with types. On the other hand the Coster typography rests entirely on a padded legend, cooked up for the national palate by Junius—on the Costerian pedigree concocted by Gerrit Thomaszoon and the bare-faced falsifications of Meerman, De Vries and others. Compare such an imposter with *Gutenberg!* a real man of flesh and blood about whose existence there is no doubt; and whose abilities as a printer even Mr. Hessels does not deny, although he dates them later than his op-

ponents. He uses some clever arguments to show that the early books hitherto attributed to Gutenberg were printed at Bamberg by Pfister; but here he is evidently conscious that his argument proves too much, for, carried out consistently, it would prove that Gutenberg never printed at all. This would be such a flying in the face of universally received evidence, that he wisely if illogically stops in his destructive career. It would indeed be a difficult task to explain the spread of Gutenberg's fame not only as a printer, but as the first printer, if we eliminate from his history the Donatuses in the Bible type, the Indulgences, and the first Bible. But as an historical fact, we find his name and his fame spread through Germany, Italy, France, England [*see* Caxton's "Chronicle"], and we may say all Europe, a century before any one ever heard of Coster. Mr. Hessels pretends that Gutenberg himself spread the rumours about himself; but the argument is very weak and untenable, for surely if Gutenberg had wished at all to uphold his fame, a simple claim at the end of his great Bible would have been much more efficacious than a roundabout plan of getting his friends Ivo Wittig, A. Gelthus, and others, to proclaim him the inventor of printing. Two words, "Gutenberg fecit," at the end of any of his works would have served the purpose. His omission to do this was probably owing to his pride, which persuaded him not to boast of what all the world knew, and for which all the world at that very time gave him credit. Mr. Hessels' whole argument here is weak—weak in the extreme—especially in supposing that debt would make him reticent.

Here, too, we must note the difference of tone in the earliest notices of the invention. The "Cologne Chronicle" mentions Holland but not a word of Coster—Gutenberg is the hero. For a century and a half no record mentions Coster, but after Junius wrote his "Batavia" the legendary figure fills Dutch literature. On the other hand, there is no doubt as to Gutenberg's first appearance. A good deal of his biography unconnected with printing is known, and when as a printer he is first spoken of, we find his name and fame the common property of the nations.

The earliest positive notice connecting Gutenberg by name with typography appears in an interesting Latin preface to a special copy of "Gasparinus" printed by Gering, at Paris, in 1472. It was written by Prof. Fichet, of the Sorbonne, he who with Jean Heynlin started the first printing-press on French soil. He there speaks at great length of the immense importance to mankind of the newly invented art which had been discovered in Germany. The important part is thus translated: "People say[1] in these parts [*i.e.* Paris] that a man named Gutenberg[2] not far from Mayence, was for-

[1] The Latin is "ferunt enim illic," which M. Philippe translates "on rapporte dans cette [contrée."

[2] The Latin is "Bonemontanus."

merly the first inventor of the Printing-Art, by means of which with rapidity, precision, and elegance, books are made by means of metal letters and no longer by means of a reed-pen as of old, nor with a quill as in our days . . . Gutenberg has discovered the way of engraving letters by means of which all that can be said or thought is at once reproduced so that it descends to posterity." When these words were printed, the Sorbonne printers, Gering, Friburger, & Crantz, had been at work about two years. They were pupils from the German school of typography, and we can hardly resist the conviction that they gave Fichet his information and that they had personal knowledge of its accuracy.

After Fichet in 1472, the next notice of Gutenberg is found in the "Chronicon" of Lignamine dated 1474. He mentions Gutenberg as a printer, and from that time onward there is an unbroken testimony in every age and in every country to the same effect.

Examining critically the earliest remains of the German press, we get into great confusion if we dethrone Gutenberg. Who could have printed the early indulgences, one of which bears the year 1454, if Gutenberg did not? His efforts there and upon the large type Donatuses, of which several fragments have been preserved, would be a fitting and useful prelude to such grand works as the Bible and Psalter, and they afford a complete reply to those who say that these magnificent specimens could never have been the first efforts of any infant press. Depend upon it, if time, as Costerians say, is to prove so much in favour of their theory, it is still more likely to unfold new Donatuses and unknown editions of the Speculum in the types of Gutenberg, & possibly with his name or some note of their origin. It is a weak cause that takes unknown discoveries for evidence.





THE BROOK AT DEEPDENE

"'twixt straight-up rocks where the roots of ivy strike, the winding stream makes rippling music as it falls from stone to stone."

EVENING AT DEEPDENE

'Tis evening! As daylight fades, tired reluctant hands lay by the work not yet done. The old mill, its four grey walls rearing high above the mossy rocks, its rough-hewed beams that read a builder's day of long ago, stands grim and silent in the evening air. From its outswung casements' grated squares, we see far below the slender water thread that ripples downward on its river way.

We go forth, my wife and I, through its broad door, and in a moment are near to nature's heart. We stroll the paths beneath tall sycamores; in elm trees' gloom. From the tender west, thro' the coloring leaves, the slowly setting sun throws lights and shades; as evening comes the lengthening shadows grow and silence falls—to saunter there is to feel old Nature's spell. We hear the laugh of countless rustling leaves above, and, pausing by the buttressed roots of a huge oak, reflect that, side by side, we too pursue a path grey heads abhor, yet glad that here at last we find a place so blest—a place of peace, and work, and rest.

Here birds sing all day long; from tangled underbrush a startled pheasant wings his way, and now and then, 'tis said, a timid deer from nearby hills is seen. By willow-veiled and grassy slopes, 'twixt straight-up rocks where the roots of ivy strike, the winding stream makes rippling music as it falls from stone to stone to feed the pool below.

We cross the crumbling bridge and for a moment on the silvery water gaze as we listen to its cheerful sound. A leaf comes eddying down, borne on a tiny steed of air; its work is done, reminding us that we, too, must work and strive to do our part before we reach the change life's autumn brings.

Beyond the brook is a clear spring, cool and deep. In its mirrored face we seem to see the ghosts of Then and Now; and kneeling as if to drink, as mute as they, we muse upon the past and try to see in its crystal depths some vision of the deeds to come.

The light is dying, night grows grey; the moon from her bright window shines; an army of stars appears, and weak-eyed bats flit by.

Let us go in and by the fire-light's ruddy glow quietly sit and ponder, until a flame shall kindle in our hearts wherein to forge the images our hearts create.

The trees and flowers, the babbling brook, the singing birds, a quiet place to think and work; beside all these, how little more than toys are the tomes that rest upon the shelves around?

[F. W. G., NOV. 1923]

PRIVATE PRESSES

AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE ART OF PRINTING

by Alfred W. Pollard

IT IS always good to use the experience of the past in dealing with present problems, and it is especially good to do this in respect to Printing, because our knowledge of the course of printing is more definite and precise than in the case of any other craft, and because the standard which the earliest printers were forced to aim at was so high that now, with all our wealth and improved machinery, we regard it as an ideal too expensive to be carried out except on the very smallest scale. The history of printing shows us a continuous decline, decade by decade, for about two centuries, from a magnificently high standard of beauty to a miserably low one, and then a gradual improvement, diversified, of course, by various ups and downs, till we come to the work of the last thirty years, of which a small fraction has been not merely as good as any that has ever been produced, but better.

Like all other craftsmen, printers, as a class, can only thrive by supplying their customers with what they want at prices which they are willing to pay. Here and there an exceptionally gifted and courageous craftsman may rely on being gradually able to obtain a better price for better work, and be rewarded for his confidence; but his success will depend not only on himself, but also on two external factors over which he has very little control, the existence of enough customers, or potential customers, able to recognize better work when they see it, and the ability and willingness of these customers to pay a higher price for it when a higher price is a necessary condition of its production. The converse of this proposition, which is concerned with the other end of the ladder, is equally true. If a customer has a certain standard of excellence in his own mind and will not be content with anything notably inferior, a printer cannot get his custom merely by cutting prices; his work must approximate to his customer's standard, though as soon as it does this his willingness and ability to undersell may gradually lower the original standard till it disappears altogether.

When printing was invented it was applied first of all to multiplying a few much used Latin grammars and calendars for which there was a large and steady sale. These early efforts, which have come down to us in fragments found in bindings, are rude and ugly enough. Fifteenth century schoolmasters did not cosset their pupils with pretty class-books; they beat them. But when Fust and Schoeffer started to produce a Psalter for use in Church, it was another matter altogether. Their patrons were used to Psalters of a certain size and form, written in red and black, and with large and small decorative initials, and Fust and Schoeffer to get the job had to struggle up to the standard, and they did it, red printing and large and small initials in red and blue included. And from 1457 onward the Church has done more than any other public body to maintain a standard of fine printing. At first the fifteenth century bishops looked askance at the new art, and stuck to manuscript for Missals and breviaries. When they decided to print, they found a vigorous way of maintaining a high standard. They commissioned the best printer they could get to do the work; they allowed him to charge an agreed price for it, and they obliged every church in their province or diocese to provide itself with a copy before a specific date.[1] In France in several instances a bishop, or the Canons of a cathedral, arranged with a printer to come to the cathedral town and print a missal or breviary under their supervision. We must not be misled into thinking of these good men as amateurs working private presses with the aid of a hired man to do the heavy work. We must look on them simply as customers, who knew what they wanted and brought the printer under their roof as the best means of seeing that they got it.

[1] The story of Bible-printing in England runs on very much the same lines. As soon as it was decided that English Bibles were to be placed in all churches, the printers were chosen, the price was fixed, and every parish was ordered to supply itself with a copy. From that day to this, with only a very partial exception for a few years under Queen Elizabeth, the printing of the plain text of the Bible has been a monopoly in England. Since the 17th century it has been kept absolutely in the hands of the King's Printers and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. From about 1770 onwards various provincial printers tried to circumvent this monopoly by printing Bibles with only a nominal amount of commentary, but hardly any of them found it worth while to issue a second edition. The monopolists knew that to maintain their rights in the 19th century, which made unrestricted competition into a fetish, they must give good value to buyers, ensure good workmanship, and give their workmen no ground for complaint. They have fulfilled all three conditions, and as a result we still have a Bible Trust in England, which is a real Trust because it is worked in the interests of everyone concerned.

As regards the printing of secular books in the fifteenth century, since the craft was a new one, it was necessarily run in the first instance by men who had been brought up to other occupations. At the outset these were largely clerks in minor orders and professional scribes; but merchants, professors and men of letters generally, were attracted to the new craft, many of them doubtless only to make money, others to print books in which they were specially interested. But we must think of this motley crowd of recruits far more as publishers than as printers. It may be doubted whether even Caxton (by trade a mercer) in all his fifteen years in the business, set up the equivalent of one of his small folios with his own hands. As printing and publishing separated off into two different occupations, except as regards the printing of the Greek and Latin classics, the men whom from their rank or other occupations we might be inclined to regard as amateurs rapidly disappear, and when we survey what they had done as a whole it is impossible to claim for their work any special excellence. If it differed at all from that of the craftsmen, it differed rather for the worse.

When we turn to the scholar-printers of the sixteenth century whom again we may be tempted to regard as amateurs, I think that the undeniable excellence of much of their work, notably that of the Estiennes, is to be attributed much more to the necessity of pleasing an unusually exacting class of customers than to any exceptional combination of artistic and literary genius on the part of the printers themselves. Classical scholarship was the fashion in the sixteenth century, in the courts of Italy, France and England, and while fashionable folk bought learned books and were content to pay a gentlemanly price for them, learned books maintained their excellence of form amid the steady deterioration of book-making generally.

"A penny, I trow, is enough for books," said one of Robert Copland's customers to him somewhere about 1530, and the spirit of that remark haunted the vernacular English book trade for nearly a century and a half. Amid all the outpouring of the wonderful Elizabethan and Jacobean literature though no printing was allowed in the provinces, except at Oxford and Cambridge, there was not a sufficient demand for books in all England to provide work for more than about five and twenty master printers, many of whom had only a single press, with a couple of journeymen and an apprentice. The Privy Council was always trying to keep down the

number, both of printers and presses, and its action in so doing is usually represented as solely dictated by the fear of their being employed in producing seditious or schismatic pamphlets. No doubt this fear was the main cause of the Council's action. But if there had been enough lawful work for twice as many printers and presses, the number might have been doubled with no increase of risk. The risk lay solely in the fact that a man who owned and could use a press, if he could not get enough lawful work to give him a living, might be tempted to take secret work. Unless they were desperate, men would not risk hanging to earn a few shillings or a few pounds, but there is ample evidence that in Shakespeare's day, some of the smaller master printers and journeymen really were desperate, and it was only natural that they should do bad work—as indeed they did. All over Europe printing at the beginning of the seventeenth century was bad; in England it was very bad indeed.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, and the whole of the eighteenth, the wealth of England steadily increased, and with its wealth the standard of education. There was a much greater demand for books, and though printing was permitted after 1693 in the provinces without restrictions, there was clearly more work to do in London. Printing became neat, and on occasion elaborate, and throughout the eighteenth century, both in England and Scotland, there were constant experiments and efforts to improve it, to which full justice has not yet been done. Among these efforts to improve it there is no reason to include Horace Walpole's private press at Strawberry Hill, or any of the other private presses which subsequently sprang up, possibly in imitation of his example. The Strawberry Hill books were handsomely printed according to the taste of the day, but they showed no originality, such as was displayed by Baskerville or even the Foulises, and they certainly started no style. The other private presses of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were purely literary in their aims, and the books produced at them are rather below than above the average good commercial work of the day.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the great spread of education caused a demand for very cheap books, both for amusement and instruction, which led to some lowering of standards. More dangerous still were the very low ideals of decorative work which found favor during the era inaugurated by the Great Exhibition of 1851. There was an epidemic of

bad taste among book buyers and publishers, and therefore printers responded to it, as they always will, whether gladly or reluctantly, respond to any popular demand which brings grist to their mill. Meanwhile much quite good work was being done by the Chiswick Press and other firms, but the influence of the amateur is not much in evidence, either for good or evil.

The Daniel Press, worked as an amusement by the Rev. C. H. O. Daniel, now[2] Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, for a good many years, beginning about 1874, seems to me one of the best examples of a really amateur press that can be adduced. The interest of its books is mainly literary, but it is also typographical, and though the performance is usually slight and even thin, Mr. Daniel showed real *flaire* in his revival of the old Fell types, his use of italics, and the happy knack with which the work was put on the page. I think Mr. Daniel's influence may possibly be traced, though only quite slightly, in some of the pretty books (often a little spoilt by the weakness of the ink) published by Kegan Paul Trench and Co., in the 'eighties, most of which were printed for them by Messrs. Ballantyne. If this is true, it is so much more to Mr. Daniel's credit.

WILLIAM MORRIS

We come now to the movement of which William Morris was the leader, which placed to the credit of English typography some of the finest books the world has ever seen. Morris must be classed as an amateur, and his press as a private press, because he printed to please himself, and no offer of money, however great, would have induced him to print anything he really disliked. We must not, however, allow the private income which enabled Morris to carry out his ideas without worrying over cash-returns, or the fact that he sold his books by means of circulars from a private house instead of over a counter, or any other consideration, to blind us to the fact that Morris was one of the world's greatest craftsmen, and certainly, if we consider his versatility, his sureness of touch and his imagination, the finest that the British Isles have ever produced. If he had had the largest printing house in London, and had printed the Kelmscott books in a special department of it to advertise the rest, it could not have made him more of a craftsman than he was. He stands in a very real sense alone by virtue of his unique personality.

Admiration for Morris led to the setting up of several private or ama-

[2] Rev. Daniel has died since this was written. See *Ars Typographica*, No. 3, p. 44 [Ed.]

teur presses, which did excellent work in his spirit, notably the Doves Press, managed at first by Mr. Cobden-Sanderson, an ex-barrister, who had produced some real masterpieces as a book-binder, and Mr. Emery Walker, the photo-engraver, afterwards by Mr. Sanderson alone; also the Ashendene Press of Mr. St. John Hornby, one of the partners in Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son, who, I fancy, has done rather more of the work with his own hands than most private printers. Robert Proctor's Greek type, again, was brought into existence by love of Morris, but Proctor, like Messrs. Ricketts and Shannon, who were responsible for the Vale type books, had no press of his own.

The beauty of all these books reinforced the influence of the Kelmscott Press ones, by proving that what Morris had done on his own lines could be done by lesser men with the variations suggested by their individual tastes. They reinforced also the proof which Morris had given that so long as it is regarded as a hobby (or in a commercial house as an advertisement) the production of really fine specimens of printing is not an impossibly expensive one. Morris made no profit from the Kelmscott books as a publisher, could allot himself no payment for all the magnificent decorative work which he put into them with his own hands. He got nothing from his venture save the joy of achievement and the pleasure of giving copies to his friends. But he proved the existence of a public willing to pay for the cost of print and paper, even when both print and paper were the best which money could buy, and I believe that most venturers in the same field have been supported to about the same extent. From our present point of view, this is one of the most important results which Morris achieved. The direct influence of his work on men like Mr. Updike and Mr. Bruce Rogers can only be reckoned very slight. But if the Kelmscott books had not made the success they did, neither Mr. Updike nor Mr. Bruce Rogers would have been given his chance, and to make it possible for younger men to get their chance is one of the finest things a master craftsman can do.

To sum up, I think it is in the general encouragement and raising of ideals rather than in providing specific models that Morris and those who have really caught his spirit have (over and above their individual achievement), influenced for good the craft of printing. It was inevitable, of course, that Morris's work should evoke a certain amount of cheap imitation, and that much of this should be poor or positively bad. But everyone, whether

printer or paymaster, who cares about printing, has had his standard raised by Morris's example, and therein, I think, lies our best hope for the future. What we have to recognize is that this hope can only be fulfilled if the education of the paymasters (under whom I include book-buyers, publishers and advertisers) goes hand in hand with that of the printers. I must own that when I have seen the admirable work being done here in England by the students of our technical printing schools, and have realized that many of these lads who would respond joyfully to the call of a man like Morris will have to earn a living in printing offices where they will have no scope whatever for the ideas with which they are bursting, I am full of sympathy for them. The customer is the printer's master, and it is only by educating his master that the printer can get scope to do fine work. If printers take on this task with a good will, perhaps in educating their customers they may find that they are themselves acquiring a new insight into their own craft.

BOOKS



Books! *sweet associates of the silent hour,*
What blessed aspirations do I owe
To your companionship—your peaceful power
High and pure pleasure ever can bestow.
Of noble ones I trace the path through life,
Joy in their joys, and sorrow as they mourn;
Gaze on their Christian animating strife,
And shed some fond tears o'er their untimely urn.
Or with heroic beings tread the soil
Of a freed country, by themselves made free,
And taste the recompense of virtuous toil,
The exaltation of humanity.

MRS. F. HORNBLOWER

DE COMMENDATIONE SAPIENTIÆ ET LIBRORUM IN QUIBUS SAPIENTIA HABITAT

ON THE COMMENDATION OF WISDOM, & OF BOOKS ❧ FROM THE PHILOBIBLON OF RICHARD DE BURY, 1287-1345

IN books we find the dead as it were living; in books we foresee things to come; in books warlike affairs are methodized; the rights of peace proceed from books. All things are corrupted & decay with time.... A book made, renders succession to the author: for as long as the book exists, the author remaining immortal, cannot die; as Ptolemy witnesseth in the prologue of his Almagest, he, he says, is not dead, who gave life to science. ¶ Truth latent in the mind, is hidden wisdom and invisible treasure; but the truth which illuminates books desires to manifest itself to every disciplinable sense, to the sight when read, to the hearing when heard: it, moreover, in a manner commends itself to the touch, when submitting to be transcribed, collated, corrected, and preserved. Truth confined to the mind, though it may be the possession of a noble soul, while it wants a companion and is not judged of, either by the sight, or the hearing, appears to be inconsistent with pleasure. ¶ But the truth of the voice is open to the hearing only, & latent to the sight [which shows us many differences of things fixed upon by a most subtle motion, beginning and ending as it were simultaneously]. But the truth written in a book, being not fluctuating, but permanent, shows itself openly to the sight, passing through the spiritual ways of the eyes, as the porches and halls of common sense & imagination; it enters the chamber of intellect, reposes itself upon the couch of memory, and there congenerates the eternal truth of the mind. . . . You are golden urns in which manna is laid up, rocks flowing with honey, or rather, indeed, honeycombs; udders yielding most copiously the milk of life; store-rooms ever full; the tree of life, the four-streamed river of Paradise, where the human mind is fed, and the arid intellect moistened and watered.

L'IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE

A TRANSLATION OF A
CHAPTER FROM "DEBUTS DE L'IMPRIMERIE EN FRANCE"
BY ARTHUR CHRISTIAN

THE art of printing was invented by Gutenberg in 1440, at Mayence. But it was not until thirty years later, or 1469, that this art made its appearance in France, where it was introduced by Ulrich Gering, Martin Crantz and Michel Friburger. If their work was without brilliancy it was none the less fertile. It gave rise to able artizans, some of whom were not long in becoming the glory of French typography.

Until the beginning of the sixteenth century printing presses could keep up competition with foreign establishments without fear of inferiority. The characters they used were not lacking in elegance, and the books they produced could bear advantageously comparison with the publications from over the Rhine.

Thus it was with the least of the Latin characters. On the contrary, the Greek typography was in a state of inferiority, and bound to attract the attention of that "grand seigneur" and friend of letters, Francis I.

So, on the 17th of January, 1538, Francis I bestowed the title of Royal Printer of Greek upon Conrad Néobar, a man well versed in the Hellenic tongue. An annual wage of 100 gold écus was allowed him, and also the privilege to sell the works that he printed. The next year was occupied in engraving Greek types. The models were furnished by Ange Vergèce, a young Cretan attached to the Collège des Trois Langues and a very able calligrapher.

The first Greek characters were engraved by Claude Garamond, the celebrated artist to whom we still owe the beautiful types of Roman and Italic characters, known under the name of *Caractères de l'Université*. They were executed in 1540 under the direction of Robert Estienne, who, having been for a year royal printer for Hebrew and Latin, succeeded Conrad Néobar, who died that same year.

These Greek types bore the name of *grecs du roi*. They have a history. The punches were placed in the Chambre des Comptes [Chamber of Accounts], but the matrices were taken to Geneva in 1551 by Robert Estienne when he had to leave France. It is there that a half century later, in 1612, they were given as a pledge by Paul Estienne, grandson of Robert, against a loan of 1500 gold écus. In 1621, at the

King's request, they were brought back by Paul Estienne himself and placed in the Collège Royal.

Under the successors of Francis I, civil wars filled France with trouble and bloodshed. The flight that letters and printing had made suffered a considerable set-back from this fact. It was only with Louis XIII that one could hope for more favorable times.

In 1632, Antoine Vitré was the royal printer. He received from Cardinal Richelieu the order to hold himself purchaser, for the King's account, although in his own name, of an important collection of oriental punches which the heirs of Savary de Brèver were about to sell. The latter, from 1589 to 1611, had been Ambassador to Constantinople. It was there that he had the punches engraved—Arab, Syrian and Persian—and these the King acquired through the medium of Antoine Vitré.

About the same time Vitré was ordered to have engraved, at the expense of the royal purse, Armenian and Ethiopean punches. This work was entrusted to Jacques de Saulecque, justly renowned as an engraver and founder of types. But difficulties arose concerning payment, and only the Armenian were executed.

Finally, in 1640, at the instigation of Cardinal de Richelieu, who considered a state printing press a powerful means of government, Louis XIII ordered the establishment of a general department of typography in the Palace of the Louvre, to which he gave the name of the *Royal Imprimerie* or Royal Press.

The royal printers had lived—the National Press had been created.

Origin of a Clever Quip

From The New York Evening Post, Friday, November 30, 1923

The ideal barber is one who allows you to read a book while you are having your hair cut. At Nick's on Vesey Street this is amiably permitted, and during a tonsure we were able to digest Temple Scott's little essay on Goudy, the famous type designer. Mr. Scott says that no other designer in all the annals of the printing craft has been so fecund. "Where Jenson or Garamond or Caslon or Baskerville can be credited with one or two or three types, Goudy must be credited with dozens." When we think about the generous rivalry between Goudy and others of his craft, we say of the other type faces, "*They're neat, but not Goudy.*"

—CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

CONFESSIO AMANTIS

A Sonnet

By

Richard Le Gallienne

When do I love you most, sweet books of mine?
In strenuous morns when o'er your leaves I pore,
Austerely bent to win austerest lore,
Forgetting how the dewy meadows shine;
Or afternoons when honeysuckles twine
About a seat, and to some dreamy shore
Of old romance, where lovers evermore
Keep blissful hours, I follow at your sign?

Yea! ye are precious then, but most to me
Ere lamplight dawneth, when low croons the fire
To whispering twilight in my little room;
And eyes read not, but, sitting silently,
I feel your great hearts throbbing deep in quire,
And hear your breathing round me in the gloom.

The Editor's Workshop

By Way of Apology

THE appearance of *Ars Typographica,* number 4, Volume I, will come, no doubt, as a surprise to many, as several years have intervened since numbers 1, 2, and 3 were issued. The Editor desires to make an explanation, excuse, apology, and also craves the indulgence of his readers who recall the first three numbers of Volume I, until now incomplete. The magazine has been in every sense a labor of love on his part, a pleasant additional task in the affairs of one busy with a variety of typographic activities; and while never for a moment intending not to issue a fourth number, matters were allowed to drift along heedless of the passing months, until now, long, too long after, the "still, small voice" has become so insistent that the hope to quiet it has brought about this belated issue. In justice to The Marchbanks Press and its late beloved proprietor, Hal Marchbanks, who first published *Ars Typographica,* the Editor must assume all responsibility for the non-appearance of number 4 as he, alone, is to blame.

The Editor realizes the over-large amount of his own matter introduced both in text and types, the reason being that they were ready to hand, and he hopes that the articles not by his hand which are presented will be found sufficiently interesting to mitigate the effect of "too much Goudy."

A considerable time after number 4 should have appeared some friends suggested that since there was no magazine to carry on toward the ideals upon which it was founded, the name and good will might be passed into other hands since the Editor was too much occupied with his own affairs [the principal one of earning a living], to give the necessary time and thought to its adequate presentation. He therefore regretfully and reluctantly did so. Mr. Douglas C. McMurtrie, the typographic historian, printer, and author took over the publication, bringing out five issues at proper intervals as editor and publisher.

These five issues departed somewhat from the path followed in the earlier numbers under the guidance of the present writer who makes no claim to erudition, and included matter leaning more to the bibliographical than to the typographical side which is his *metier.* This is in no sense a criticism of Mr. McMurtrie's work; it is simply a statement of fact. The maga-

zine naturally assumes again for this issue the character of the first three numbers in the interests of harmony. It asks your kind consideration.

Mr. Melbert B. Cary, Jr., irked at the incompleteness of Volume I, has kindly produced this number at his *Press of the Woolly Whale*, partly to save the face of his friend the Editor [but who suspects he does so mainly that he may complete his own Volume I and despairs of ever being able to do so otherwise]; he is entitled to any kudos accruing from his unselfish gesture.

A portion of the type composition was done by Mrs. Goudy before a serious illness prevented further work on her part, and the remainder is by Mr. George W. Van Vechten, Jr., of the Press of the Woolly Whale, who also has done the presswork, as well as aiding in many ways.

✣

WILLIAM MORRIS, poet, translator, writer of prose romance, decorator, craftsman, designer, and maker of beautiful books, was born one hundred years ago, and many magazines, both here and abroad, are recounting the significant facts regarding his work and influence. For the Morris number of *Philobiblon*, published by Herbert Reichner, Vienna, the Editor contributed an article on Morris's influence on American printing. William Morris has been a household god to him for many years, and in 1903 when he founded his own Village Press, an essay on *Printing* by William Morris and Emery Walker was selected for its first reprint. "It was in the expression of his inborn creative influence; in his keen sense of rhythmic order & fine observance of restrained harmony manifested in his printed works; in his respect for tradition which, however, in pursuit of an ideal he regarded as neither a fixed nor unchangeable decree, wherein I [the Editor] myself, find the valuable lesson he taught."

The article in this issue by Alfred Pollard was written a number of years ago for a magazine now defunct and the publisher sold it to another concern who, in turn, transferred it to *Ars Typographica*. It is published here without Mr. Pollard's knowledge, but what he says about Mr. Morris, whom he must have known personally, makes it so timely that the Editor hopes that Mr. Pollard will not be too severe on us for its inclusion here so many years after it was written.

What Mr. Pollard has to say regarding Mr. Updike and Mr. Rogers so long ago is interesting in the light of the high standing accorded them in the craft today.

Ars Typographica is glad to add its tribute to the great typographer and presents as frontispiece a portrait of Morris reproduced from a photogravure print made by Mr. Emery Walker [later Sir Emery] from a photograph by him, and who kindly inscribed and presented it to the Editor in 1921.

"EVENING at DEEPDENE" [name of a modest estate at Marlboro, N.Y., where the Editor carries on his work of designing type, cutting matrices, founding types, occasionally setting and printing them, and while resting from these labors tries his hand at editing and authorship] was written under the spell of the place a short time after establishing his residence there. The illustration facing the article shows the brook whose "rippling music" he hears as he works and which, some sixty feet below, meets his eye as he glances from a casement by his work-bench in the old mill facing the stream.

✥

IN the first three issues of *Ars Typographica*, the Editor in each number showed for the first time one or more of his own type faces to add variety to its typographical makeup; in this number he has gone those issues one better by setting the various articles that comprise the magazine in types which have here practically their first showing, excepting one or two which have been employed in a privately printed volume or other occasional use. Excepting the *Deepdene* used in these notes, they have not as yet been offered for general sale. The names of the new types may be found in the Table of Contents following the titles of the articles set in them.

✥

AS the Editor of *Ars Typographica* approaches a time of life when his work must necessarily soon cease, he is anxious to record, in cold type, some of his activities in type design covering a period of over a quarter century. Since 1896, to the present time, he has drawn more than ninety types —of which over eighty have actually been cut and used. So far as volume is concerned it is a record of which he is proud. As to quality, that is something which, perforce, must be left to posterity to decide, and that is one reason why he gives some of his later designs currency here. It is quite likely that some copies of *Ars Typographica* will survive him. It is reasonable to suppose that type-lovers of a distant day may be as avid for information regarding the type productions of today as we are regarding the intimate details of the work of Gutenberg, Jenson, Aldus—details that, in the main, are not obtainable today. Suppose Gutenberg had said, somewhere in The Book of Books, that it *was* a Bible, that it had been *printed* from types [not a MS.], where it was printed, by whom printed, and when. What a lot of controversy would have become unnecessary!

Now the Editor does not predict or intend to suggest any such demand for details regarding *his* work on the part of posterity, but, nevertheless, he's leaving precious little to posterity's imagination if by chance any of his types do survive to a later day.

Whether you like them or not, the fact remains that they are the work of one man, many of them not only drawn, but actually engraved by him in one or more point sizes; the unusual thing is that he took up and learned by his own efforts the intricate business and multiplicity of details of type founding *since* the issue of *Ars Typographica* No. 3, and, in fact, since his sixtieth birthday.

✣

WITH this issue, *Ars Typographica* bids farewell to those friends who recognized and appreciated in it an attempt on the part of its Editor to be of service to better typography. How well we have succeeded must be left to our readers to say. The name "Ars Typographica" was found in an account of "Early Representations of the Printing Press" by Falconer Madan, which appeared in Volume I, *Bibliographica;* it seemed so apt that the Editor hailed it almost as an inspiration. Much of the matter used in the magazine has been taken wherever found and given new environment in its pages in the belief that it would there find an audience not otherwise open to it.

In some respects, the reception of the earlier numbers of *Ars Typographica* was a disappointment to the Editor. He figured that the material presented, although familiar to most collectors & bibliophiles, would interest the printer disinclined to research, as it would bring cut-and-dried bits of typographic lore and information not easily available to him. To the Editor's surprise [and chagrin] printers, for whom the publication was planned, cared for it not a damn, and librarians, book-collectors, advertising typographers and other printing laymen who already had the contents of the magazine in some form or other in their own libraries bought it; many readers praised it, and a few criticised it.

✣

THE Editor is glad of the opportunity to present on page nineteen the portrait of Bertha M. Goudy which, he is confident, will be welcomed by her many unknown friends who know "Bertha Goudy" only as a name. For over thirty years her "spirit and performance," her "keen interest in technical processes," her "marked ability in craftsmanship" have been devoted to the work of the Village Press. The Editor desires to quote here his dedication to her from his work *The Alphabet* [1918], since the sentiment therein expressed remains no less true today:

To his wife, BERTHA M. GOUDY, *his friend, companion, and co-worker, this volume is affectionately inscribed by the author. Whatever success he may have achieved in the fields of typography and design has been made possible by her unfailing patience, counsel, and intelligent craftsmanship.*

ARS TYPOGRAPHICA

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Ars Typographica

Salve et vale!

OCTOBER, 1934

ALL OF THE TYPES USED IN THIS MAGAZINE
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If you are interested in and can use or specify the special Goudy types appearing in this issue, a note addressed to

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ASSOCIATION
Inc.
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New York City, N. Y.

will bring full information concerning the sizes that are available. Many are already cast and ready for immediate delivery. When writing, please name the series which you desire.

