

intermediate period. Here, too, are the great memorandum books containing notes-of-hand from Rubens; particulars of all the work for which estimates were required, and all the payments by Philip of Spain. As a sure guide to the position of the workmen in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, we have the wages-books complete showing the weekly earnings of compositors, pressmen, engravers, and bookbinders over a period of three centuries. Then what can we say in estimating the interest of the same extent of letter-books in which is preserved the correspondence of the house? The number of autograph letters is beyond belief, and all are carefully and chronologically docketed; the autographs of kings, statesmen, philosophers, historians, and artists are preserved side by side with the most illustrious printers of France, Germany, Italy, England, and Spain. Very few of them have been edited, and many will throw quite a new light upon the literary questions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the same collection are found royal diplomas, inventories, wills, genealogies, accounts of travel on business, and family matters, and lastly a long autobiography of Plantin himself, in which he narrates the hopes and fears, the disappointments and successes of fifteen eventful years. One of the letters above mentioned supplies an interesting fact in Plantin's life. The French King sent letters patent, appointing him "King's Printer," a very lucrative as well as honourable position. Plantin, however by the advice of the Spanish ambassador, declined the honour, satisfied with the title he already had of "Architypographus" to Philip II. of Spain. The Duke of Savoy and Piedmont also wished for his services, and there is his letter inviting Plantin to Turin. The Duke offered to purchase at Plantin's own price his whole establishment, and to present him with 1,000 gold crowns as a bonus; he promised to erect new and extensive printing-offices at Turin, over which Plantin