

commission and omission have almost led to the extinction of both steel and wood engraving, and it may be here briefly stated that time and the cost of production are the greatest factors governing this result.

It is not my intention to cast a stone at modern process work, which has done so much to extend the knowledge of the fine arts. The engraver's interpretation of a picture or his rendering of a design was not always too faithful, and by the aid of the camera, line-drawing in particular can be rendered line for line in facsimile. It would be as logical to quarrel with Caxton's printing press because it supplanted the manuscripts of ecclesiastical writers with their wealth of illumination.

In the present volume an attempt is made to indicate the lines upon which a man possessed of artistic taste may proceed in order to acquire a fair working knowledge of the subject of old prints, and to point the way whereby with a limited outlay he may be able to derive unlimited enjoyment in collecting specimens of engraving of great artistic excellence.

The number of persons are obviously few who can afford to pay £2,000 for the etching of *Rembrandt with the Sabre*, or £200 for *Lady Talbot* engraved in mezzotint by Valentine Green, or even £20 for the stipple engraving, *The English Fireside*, by P. W. Tomkins. There is a twenty-shilling public whose art instincts are not less acutely developed, but whose spending capacity is strictly limited by the resources of a slender purse. It is for this public

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