

THE FIRST PRINTED BOOK.

BY W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

[The *first printed book*, it is said, was produced by Faust and Schœffer, at Mentz, August 14, 1457.]

With musing brow and thoughtful eye,
 The printers sit in their secret room—
 And the marvellous letters about them lie,
 And the mystic press stands apart in the gloom;
 Before them spreads each dainty line
 Of the Book just borne from their subtle thought:
 Arise, O moon! let thy lustre shine
 On the wondrous work their brains have wrought!
O World take heed! we sow the seed—
O World, beware when the millions read!

Shine out, O moon! on the printed book—
 The first-begotten from yonder press—
 Into the dusky chamber look,
 And gild with thy glow the great success!
 Light up the pale wan brow, and fire
 The sunken eye—light up the soul
 Of the printer! ay, his brain inspire
 With the victor's joy who wins the goal!
O World, take heed! we sow the seed—
O World, beware when the millions read!

Brother! O brother! my heart is alight
 With burning thoughts! O happy man!
 The cloud, and the storm, and the shadowy night
 Shall surely vanish. Ha! ha! we plan
 A noble work for the coming Time,
 To carry the torch from hand to hand:
 Methinks the bells of the Future chime
 Triumphal music in every land!
O World, take heed! we sow the seed—
O World, beware when the millions read!

No more shall Wisdom meanly lurk
 In the scholar's cell—nor the poet's strain,
 Nor sage's thought in secret work—
 Brain shall responsive speak to brain!
 The humblest hind in the lowliest cot,
 Shall bless the page where genius gleams
 With a light and a glory unforget,
 And lap his soul in the bravest dreams!
We sow the seed, but, World, take heed—
O World, beware when the millions read!

O God! may our Work be never abas'd
 To speed afar the prolific lie;
 For with noble, tender fancies grac'd,
 And generous thoughts, 'twill never die!
 Let Truth live sparkling in every line—
 Let Virtue brighten o'er each page;
 Then shall the Press be a Thing Divine—
 The priest and prophet of every Age!
O World, take heed! we sow the seed—
O World, beware when the millions read!