

such as he would seize the crown and set up for themselves. There are some things that are established beyond dispute, and so do not admit of discussion. This was one. The sceptic was told to "read history" with such an air of assurance that he inferred proof would be forthcoming on demand. Those who insisted on chapter and paragraph were told to "Go to the devil, who is fresh from school!" When we come to probe the minds of men, it is astounding to observe the extent to which cheek and make-believe may pass for knowledge.

The compositors talked ponderously of the "power of the press," while the devil demonstrated it by getting his fingers nipped in the cog-wheels. No less than three of the former came to work in a frock coat and one of the old stagers had for ten years supported the dignity of a top hat, which had for ten years previous to that been a "wrong fount" in the office and the subject of criticism on the street. The frock coats were all faded and the lapels of one furnished a toboggan slide for flies, by reason of grease, beer and snuff. The snuff-box was still in evidence among the elderly men, and, as an act of gracious condescension, the devil was occasionally invited to take a pinch. In fact, the office was redolent with the odour of antiquity.

At 11 a.m., the "cub" (*alias* the devil, *alias* John Smith), gripping two broom-handles by the middle, from which depended sundry cans, each containing the wherewithal or an I O U, sallied forth, with a brazen disregard of public opinion, for the lunch beer, being exhorted to temperance on his return by those who, having been devils themselves, opined they had received scant measure—a custom that to-day is dying a hard, lingering death in England.

We still cherished the old custom of sending the imp with a bucket to the farthest printing office, on All Fools' Day, to borrow some two-line double demy italic hair spaces, or on some other nonsensical errand. We also cultivated his love for natural history by exhibiting type-lice for his edification, which to see is never to forget. The trick was done in this wise: A galley of type was divided in the middle and the opening filled with dirty water, wherein these interesting little creatures were said to be disporting themselves. The imp was told to look very closely or he would not see them, and while doing so the type was suddenly pushed together, causing the water to spurt up into his eyes. And if this did not cure him of curiosity, there were other equally pleasant little devices to reduce him to that state of cynical stoicism for which the genus "comp." is noted. Alas! for the devastating hand of Time, the type-louse has become a scientific microbe. Where is now the romance of printing?—the artifice of "the art preservative of arts?" O Ichabod! O *tempora*, O *Moses*!

Shall I ever forget the first pi I made? I fancy I hear poor Jenkins turn over in his coffin at the bare mention of it. My wife's first pie may become a vague reminiscence, but that pie never! It was one of the greatest achievements of modern times—according to Jenkins, it was unparalleled in history. But when excited he was wont to exaggerate, and he may have overshot the mark. He called heaven and earth to witness it, and prayed for my forgiveness. Better I had never been born, much less apprenticed to printing, than perpetrate that awful act of typographical confectionery. Poor Jenkins (excuse these copious tears!) he died of an indigestion contracted through it. In after years, whenever he was thirsty or financially "out of sorts," he reminded me of that pi, and this in such a reproachful tone of heroic resignation that I had not the heart to refuse him. His demise was accelerated by futile attempts to clear his crop of it with strong waters, and the only consolation I can derive from his fate is the fact that he frankly declared he was not afraid of meeting my equal here or hereafter.

A double crown forme of intricate statistical tables in nonpareil had been set up, anathematized, excommunicated, corrected, revised and proved for press, and had just been taken off the stone to go down to the press-room, when I appeared on the scene, fell over a box of new type on the floor and put my knee