

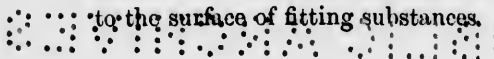
PROTOTYPOGRAPHY.

*Read by Rev. Dr. Scudding, at the Carlton Celebration of the Canadian Institute,
Toronto, June 13, 1877.*

We contemplate with some astonishment the facility with which little children acquire a language, the quickness with which they catch the right use of words, of peculiar expressions and idioms. And when at a later stage, the processes of reading, writing and ciphering are proposed to them, we are equally struck with the readiness with which, in most instances, these processes are mastered; a readiness such that after the lapse of a few months or years, skill in these arts seems to the possessor and to others the result almost of intuition.

The reason of all this is: the certainty, now proved by long experience, that there is in the human mind, naturally, a predisposition and preparedness to form language, first simple, then complex; and to make it, when thus formed, visible and permanent in some way. And similarly in regard to numbers; there is, without doubt, a like predisposition and preparedness, first to use them, and then to reduce them, for convenience, to visible shape.

Printing, it is manifest, is an ultimate development of these innate human tendencies. The germ of the discovery was in the Race; but its evolution was deliberate, and regulated by conditions; and so, in natural order, first came the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. In short, the history of printing is a repetition of that of language itself, of writing, of numbers, of painting, of music; each of which took centuries to attain to the degree of excellence in which we now are so fortunate as to receive them. Signet rings and stamps of all kinds were a species of printing apparatus. The scarabæi, made of hard stone, found in the tombs of Egypt, bear on their under side elaborate inscriptions, evidently intended to be transferred—and that, too, probably through the medium of a pigment—to the surface of fitting substances. The dies of coins and medals in



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