

**THE ART PRESERVATIVE.**

Commenting on the Quarecentenary celebration of the introduction of Printing into England, the *Printers' Register* says: It cannot be denied that Caxton arrived in London with a mission less important only than that of St. Augustine. But when people talk of the advantages of Printing they frequently overlook the real point that is involved. Gutenberg was not the first printer. He found printing a wide, an actually flourishing business. It had been invented many centuries before: it was then carried on in an extensive, a systematic manner. What good had it done? The answer must be, very little indeed. We talk about the benefits to civilisation of printing. What benefits has it conferred in China, where the art has been known and practised for ages? It is not, indeed, Printing in the abstract, that has done anything of importance for the benefit of mankind, but one branch of it, one method or process that has brought all those advantages that so many eloquent men will soon be expatiating upon.

As long as learning was the monopoly of the few, a privilege almost of a class, it served little better ends than to perpetuate and indensify popular ignorance. So long as writing was an accomplishment confined to the very few it was of slight use as a means of promoting learning. And as long as printing was concerned only in the production of alphabets, playing cards, and pictures of the saints, it did very little good indeed to the people at large. It was the invention of Typography, not the art of printing, that has done so much for us. The simple fact of cheapening the mode of production has revolutionised literature, and it is the fact that the peasant can now possess his book as well as the prince that we ought to enlogise when we commemorate Caxton and his great predecessor Gutenberg.

Perhaps it is to the highest development of the principle of cheapness—the cheap Press, that in the end we shall be most indebted for our progress in knowledge and civilisation. A great French writer anticipated that before the present century had expired the periodical press would be the entire press; books would have to give way to newspapers. His vaticinations do not seem to be in the way of realisation, for of making many books there is still no end. It would, however, be idle to deny that the power of the Press is daily increasing, and that the really important thoughts of our great thinkers are more and more frequently being given to the world, not in the shape of treatises and tomes, but in the columns of journals. The most important discoveries, too, are first recorded in the same vehicles. The daily increasing influence of this mighty power is distinctly the effect of cheap printing—the typography that circulates among the mass of the people.

We have only to compare the England of to-day with what it was four hundred years ago, to realise the influence of the art of printing. Beginning with the liberty of the subject, what a vast change has taken place. The despotic will of a king is not now the arbiter of the people's destinies. Public opinion, embodied in a free press, practically governs the country. Without the printing press this public opinion could not have been created, and without the printing press public opinion, as a force in the realm, could not be maintained. The political economist, the sociologist, may from time to time issue treatises which, like some of the late John Stuart Mill's, shape for a generation the legislation of the country on some particular point; but it is the million-tongued press that speaks the will of the people and dictates how its laws are to be framed.

Printing is not only a political power, but an eminently educational one. Indeed, we can hardly conceive of an education that is possible without books. The benefits which printing has conferred on this important cause are altogether inconceivable. As education is diffused, so printing does more and more to benefit it. At the present day a complete book of history, of arithmetic, or geography may be

had for one penny; and even an atlas is published for that trifling sum. The poorest child consequently has opened to him the storehouse of knowledge, as completely, perhaps, as those who have the amplest wealth. For education in current affairs, printing gives us our penny daily paper, with its telegrams from all parts of the world—its leaders written often with a grace and point not unworthy of Johnson or Goldsmith—and its advertisements telling us of the various and myriad wants of the community among whom we reside.

The services of printing in promoting religion are among the most obvious of its many other services. It was stated a few days since that every second of time three bibles are issued from the printing press. Almost from its invention has printing been engaged in multiplying copies of the Holy Scriptures, and the vast number of bibles and testaments which the press has produced must have had an influence which we cannot adequately realise. A good bible may now be had for 3d., a testament for 2d., and a book of common prayer for 1d. No one, therefore, need be at a loss for religious instruction, when for about 6d. he can obtain a complete set of theological text books.

Printing has furthered trade and commerce to an extent that no other agency has. If man lived in a state of isolation from his fellow-men, there would be no need of trading at all; but as long as communication with others is necessary, printing affords the readiest method of expressing our wants. It also increases our wants, by bringing before our notice something which we would like to possess, but of whose existence we had previously been ignorant. Every day some new article of use or ornament is brought into sale by a judicious employment of the printing press; and if the latter were to stop its operations, many thousands of our countrymen would lose their entire livelihood.

We cannot, in a few desultory sentences, express a title of the thoughts that arise in the mind when Printing is presented. It is indeed a mysterious art, yet so simple and so obvious. We speak through the press to the eyes of our fellow-men, who may be removed from us by countless miles of land and sea. We give, through the press, to thought an embodied form, and set it legibly before the eye, ready to germinate and give life to other thoughts. Through the printing press the dumb speak, the deaf hear, the blind see. The loss of a sense is compensated for, and no longer does the bereaved one require to remain in the blackness of ignorance. By the printing press we touch the heads and the hearts of our fellow beings. Even where spoken words would not prevail, sometimes the printed word has power to move. By the printing press communion is established between all the members of the great family of mankind, wheresoever situated. By it we travel, in imagination, over all countries, learn what they are like and by whom they are peopled. The printing press confers distinctions on the living, immortality on the dead. It allows no deed, once committed to its protection, to be lost in oblivion. In life it gives us glimpses of eternity. Typography is truly the noblest of the arts, and has already done more for civilisation, progress, and liberty, than any agency, with the single exception of Christianity, that the world has ever witnessed.

**WORTH KNOWING.**—Every now and then one hears of lock-jaw resulting from a rusty nail running into the foot, or from a wound caused by rusty iron. It is positively asserted that all such wounds may easily be healed by thoroughly smoking for about twenty minutes with burning wool or woolen cloth. Such application will remove the pain and inflammation from any wound.

**GOOD WORK.**—It is recognized that plain type, good ink, good paper, combined with first-class workmanship, command respectful attention where cheap and tawdry printing is unheeded.

**The Dominion Printer.**

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1/4 "	10.00	30.00
1 column.	15.00	50.00
1/2 "	10.00	30.00
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