

### THE SCHOOL OF THE PRINTING OFFICE.

The lessons taught in the School of the Printing Office are so numerous that few can be noticed, and none dwelt upon at length, in the brief space allotted to a single article. All, however, are of importance to a correct knowledge and a successful carrying on of the "art," and though they may have been alluded to before, the beginning of a new year is a fitting time to recall them to memory, and urge that they be neither overlooked nor ignored.

It is only by constant study that any printer can meet the demands of the day. There appears to be no limit to the capabilities of type metal in the type founder's hands. The forms of yesterday are looked upon as already old in this fast age, and all are upon the *qui vive* for what the morrow will produce, and ready to seize upon the possibilities.

But there are certain things connected with the "art preservative" that can never become old: certain principles and duties that will last as long as press and type; and they underlie all that makes printing what it has become, and will add to its greatness and power as the years roll on, if but rightly understood and acted upon.

It has been well written that "cleanliness is next to godliness." True, it cannot be carried to the extreme that it is in "my lady's chamber," but it can be much more than generally the case. The reasons given why a printing office should be a lumber room, dirty, littered with paper and inky mistakes, have long been obsolete, if indeed they were in the least tenable.

With the more ample space, and light, and conveniences of the present, there is no plausible excuse for an accumulation of things offensive to the eye and sense of smell. In a sanitary point of view alone, there should never be any thing of the kind, if the printer holds his life and health in the same ratio with those engaged in other callings. Besides, dirt and confusion are enemies of rapid and successful work. No man can do labor in as *paying a manner, or with one-half the pleasure, in a filthy office that he can in a clean and pure one.* The evidence of that is too apparent to need enlarging upon.

We hold, consequently, that CLEANLINESS is *prima facie* evidence of a good printer. Certainly, dirt and litter never contributed toward the setting up of a "good job," even though, now and then, one may be gotten out in defiance of it, if there is a sufficiency of patience and enough of time wasted. Set down cleanliness, therefore, as the first study taught in the printing office, and see that nothing runs counter to it.

ORDER is a natural growth of cleanliness. Attention to one is attention to the other. They are so interwoven as to be very difficult of separation, even if it is possible. The quickest way to "clean up" is to put all that is "lying around loose" in their proper places. Order goes ever with neatness—is her handmaiden. The "rubbish" cannot be swept away without doing very much toward its establishment, and with the one we have an almost surety of the other.

PUNCTUALITY is the very essence of success. Not only punctuality in fulfilling engagements, but in being "on hand" when the time of working arrives. You may chase a lost hour all day and never be able to catch it, try never so hard; on the contrary, it will chase you, and annoy and defeat your plans. Beginning work at the appointed time makes the rest comparatively easy. There is nothing of "hurry" then, as is certain to be the case with the sluggard and the loiterer. The prompt man is one who, as a rule, accomplishes much—is satisfied with himself, and gives satisfaction to his employer. He goes cheerily about his tasks, and they do not drag on his hands; or what says the old song—

"Your merry heart gangs a' the day,  
Your sad one tires a mile a'."

When the hour comes, there is the man. He annoys not others by coming late. And such a one can be trusted. As he began, so will he finish; and when "slack times" come he has no fear of being discharged, knowing his own worth and feeling that it is appreciated.

PUNCTUALITY in fulfilling engagements, in keeping your word to the letter, is, also, a "right bower" of success, and when accidents come, as come they will in the best regulated printing offices, even as in "the best regulated families," the fact will be a good friend and defender. Having established a name for always being punctual, your word will not be questioned, and every possible facility given. A job promised should never be delayed. You have no means of judging of what importance it may be to the customer, and when the appointed time comes he should have it. Every instant of delay

not only detracts from your reputation as a business man, but may cause serious annoyance and loss. *The time to the hour of promise is yours—every subsequent moment his.* Many a good patron has lost his patience by running after or waiting for a job, and you lost a customer that you could ill afford to spare. This never should be, and there is no valid excuse for it. You have it within your power to say when work can be finished, and any reasonable man will not grumble if he has faith in your word. But when you say it will be ready, he has a right, morally and legally, to depend upon it, and should not be disappointed. A promise unfulfilled in this regard (unless accidents bar, or circumstances arise, or sickness and death come, that make it beyond the bounds of human power) is falsehood, and any milder name is but evasion.

TASTE is as necessary in the printing office as in any walk of life—the aesthetic as much a component part of the manipulation of type and border and rule as of pencil and brush. The uninitiated cannot conceive how very much an eye for beauty has to do with the proper selection and arrangement. One "hand" will fashion material into something pleasing to the eye—something that will give satisfaction, and another from the same make a "botch," that is repugnant to every sense. There is a "fitness" in the possibilities of a printing office that should be studied much more than it is. Taste should be more cultivated, and the higher forms of beauty sought. A printer should be both like and unlike the wife of Sam Slick, as described by himself. "She hasn't an ear for music," he said, "but she has an eye for type." A printer should love the cheerful "click" of the die, the rattling and whirling of the press, and the deep diapason of the engine that keeps all moving, in a realm of order and cleanliness. These things go far toward establishing the beauty of the whole.

But it is of the tasteful arrangement of the component parts of job, or paper, or "ad," that we were speaking—having the "head" and "display" lines fit the "body." All who handle type know what this means, and how a slight change will often turn an *autre* thing into a tasteful, beautiful and satisfactory one.

In the present, when inventor and designer and founder are giving so much time to the exaltation and beautifying of the "art"—when the delicate tracery of the graver is rivaled—when there is absolutely nothing that can be carved or etched that is not reproduced in type metal, it is incumbent upon the printer to do his quota, and, by the cultivation of taste, by searching for the beautiful, to raise the standard of the "art," will it arrive to the very limit of human perfection. It will *pay to do so*—will become a pleasure, and the "works that live after them" will be a better monument than marble that he performed his task aright, and like a worthy follower of Franklin.

REGULARITY chimes so intimately with punctuality and order that little can be said more than has already been. A well defined and faithfully followed system advances work marvellously. It is the "governor" of the entire machine; the controlling power over the "loose ends"; the index finger upon the dial of business, that makes one thing follow another without clashing, and keeps all upon the move. With it, there can be no jar or confusion, and thousands of the petty annoyances of life are avoided. Method is more than haste in the great majority of cases—is "heaven's first law." The hare ran swiftly, but the slow plodding tortoise kept up its regular progress, and, arriving first at the goal, won the prize. "Slap-dash" style, "hit and miss" fashion, "miss" far more frequently than they "hit." Regular work, regular hours, regular habits, produce regular patrons and regular payments, and that is the life blood of printing as of all other branches of trade.

INTEMPERANCE! What a text for a sermon! What a theme for a sad song! Important as are all the other lessons taught in the School of the Printing Office, they fade into nothingness before it. All their benefits cannot do away with, can never be an accepted sacrifice for its curse. Its name is devil, and its work is darkness, doom, destruction and death. Over its portals is written, in letters of flame, the motto of the Inferno: "Who enters here leaves hope behind"—hope, the sole thing left to mankind when the accursed box of Pandora was opened!

Over all classes of society, in every walk of life, in every trade, profession and occupation, its withering blight is cast. But, perchance, there is nowhere that it falls with more fatal power than in the printing office. At least, we see and feel it more deeply there; and would that we were "trumpet-tongued," to raise our voice against its folly and madness, its temporal degradation, and its eternal punishment. No man who gives himself to inebriety should have any foothold in a printing office. He is almost as dangerous there as in a powder maga-

zine. He is not a perfectly sane man—can never be while under the influence of his cups. He will certainly disregard all the fundamental rules laid down as important for success; will never be punctual, neat, orderly, nor can have any but a disturbed conception of beauty; cannot be relied upon at all in an emergency; cannot be relied upon at all, for the very hour when he is needed the most, the chances will be that he is making a beast of himself in some saloon, or sleeping off the effects of his potion as a beast.

Looking back through the years since we "learned the case" and first handled "stick and rule," we mark the wrecks of manhood by the wayside with sorrow and tears. Rum has been the quicksands that have drawn in, alas! how many? Has left scars upon many hearts that even time can never heal. Black pictures rise up from memory. The young, the strong, the talented, the one in the prime of life and usefulness, the old man with silvered locks, all have been sucked down in the maelstrom. There are graves everywhere, and the hand that dug them was intemperance. Ruin strikes ever by its side, and destruction goes with it as the whirlwind. Children are worse than orphaned, and wives more than widowed. The heaven of countless happy homes has been turned into a living hell, and the murderous knife not left unattended with blood.

Our experience is that of the world. The same panorama of misery and crime is unrolled before all eyes. One picture is but the reproduction of another. All the pigments used are sad tinted, save as dashed with the crimson of precious blood. There is not, never can be, a single ray of light, or bloom, or beauty. Not a glimpse of happiness ever glides the gloom. It is a gathering of blighted hopes, lives thrown away, opportunities wasted, wealth squandered, love broken-hearted, suicidal misery, scenes of shame, the loathsome prison, the chains of delirium, the pauper's grave. Were we writing a scenario, we would tremblingly ask after such a life, after the soul had covered the abused body and the soul stood before the Judgment bar, what then? But we forbear. It is not our pleasure nor our province. The world of the drunkard has curses enough for him without our travelling beyond, and assuming the prerogative and the duty of another prophet.

But with Intemperance—we all who in the slightest degree have the good of their fellows at heart—have to do; and he who does not raise his voice against it is unworthy of the name of man, and stands self-convicted of moral cowardice. It is the greatest, the most wide-spread, the most deadly curse of our nation and our times—the most insidious. It wrines within folds as subtle as the everlasting horror of Michael Angelo—the Laocoon. Ah! I well was it named the serpent of the still. It is a monster serpent, and its embrace awful, slimy, clinging and ponderous. It dazzles but to make drunk; makes drunk but to render its victims hopeless, friendless, godless; is a monster of destruction, growing fat upon tears and groans and blood, and laughing as it ever drags down its slaves to perdition.

One would think, in the present age of the world, there would be no necessity of raising a warning voice upon the subject. Volumes have been written, lectures delivered, whose words, if strung together, would form a net for the world, but he fact is patent that the curse yet remains. The evidences are too plain to admit of denial. We see them in our daily walks and feel them in our business. They speak from the gutter and thunder from the station-house. It causes the wailing upon the hearth-stone; the cries for bread from the orphans; the tears as blood of the widow; the erection of the gibbet, and makes fat the graveyard.

Shall there be no end to this? Can nothing be done to save and purify? To us who love printing, and believe it to be the highest of all arts, it devolves to guard it from desecration. Every printer is as a brother. There is an invisible bond of union between all—a sort of un-"lodged" Freemasonry. Too much, far too much, have we suffered from the prison, not to pray for a cure. We would save, if we could; would fling abroad a wide mantle of charity; would lift up the fallen; would give assistance to the weak—but we cannot entirely sacrifice ourselves. We all have our laws and statutes, and they must not be forgotten. We have wives and children, whose love must not be thrown to the winds, and who must be cherished and protected from the rough winds. Not always can a fatted calf be killed when the prodigal, denied all shelter and starving upon husks, is forced to return. Our duty is first to those dependent upon us; after that, others. And what does this duty teach? Is the lesson not plain? The forgiveness of seventy times seven has been more than given. Now we are called upon to act, Act, how? Surely, so that it may be felt. The duty of the employer is plain. Intemperance must be driven from the printing office. It can soon be done. Mark the man who persists in it. Give him no right hand of fellowship; give him no employment. There are plenty of sober men to take the places; and if they do not reform, and persist in going to the dogs, the better for those who remain.

It must come to this at last, even if the time is delayed. Costly presses and material are not safe in the hands of one given to inebriety. At any moment wholesale destruction may come, and then who is to pay the damage? Not the one who spends his all in the grocery and wine shop. Besides, the morals of the craft forbid; and the sorrow and misery, the starvation, the destruction of character and the destruction of precious human life, all cry out as angels against it.

Men, printers, we call upon you to act—to act now. There is no time for delay. Let the year just dawned be fruitful in the blessings of temperance. Let the craft be purified, redeemed, raised up. Let it be known and respected—be forever freed from the curse of the wine cup, and its long train of evil and horrors. With heart and hand we will go with you; will do all that within us lies. The many are upon the right side—the few must join the ranks or be driven from it.

These are a few of the lessons taught in the School of the Printing Office. They deserve a careful study and earnest thought. No one can hope to become a good and respected and successful printer without doing so. The few ideas we have advanced show something of their importance, but not all; very far from it. Pages might be added. But, enough. We look forward to a golden harvest of good. Shall our hopes be vain?