

PRINTING AS A FINE ART.

THERE seems to be a great difference of opinion among printers generally in regard to art in printing. "Art" is too often applied to a piece of printing when in reality "fancy" would be the proper term. The difference of opinion is largely due to the non-existence of an apprenticeship system. In the leading printing offices of the United States, from whence emanates the bulk of fine printing, the management usually regulates the apprenticeship problem, and in well regulated offices there is not much difficulty experienced in retaining skilled workmen. Master printers cannot expect to rely wholly upon the Typographical Union for their supply of skilled workmen, and it is a question as to whether the blame can be placed with the Union for the large number of incompetents among its ranks.

Below are given the opinions of different writers relating to printing as an art.

William Dean Howells, who does not seem to be over proud of the fact that he was once a printer, says:

"Though I cannot pretend that printing is an art in the highest sense, I have heard old journeymen claim that it was a profession and ought to rank with the learned professions, but I am afraid it was from too fond a pride in it. It is in one sort a handicraft like any other, like carpentering or stone cutting"—and he might have added blacksmithing.

It is quite evident that Mr. Howells has only an imperfect knowledge of printing. However, we all know what the country printing office is like, and also that there can be little room for art where it is necessary to utilize all available space for the accommodation of potatoes, pumpkins, cabbage, etc., received in payment for the paper. One would naturally suppose that his present occupation would enable him to be more observant in regard to the progress of printing.

Victor Hugo, although not a printer, entertained a somewhat different opinion of printing than that expressed by Mr. Howells. Mr. Hugo says:

"Gutenberg is a redeemer. These submersions of the work of the mind, inevitable before the invention of printing, are impossible at present. Printing is the discovery of the inexhaustible. It is perpetual motion found for social science. From time to time a despot seeks to stop or slacken it, and he is worn away by the friction. The impossibility to shackle thought, the impossibility to stop progress, the book imperishable—such is the result of printing. Before printing, civilization was subject to losses of substance; the essential signs of progress, proceeding from such a philosopher or such a poet, were all at once lacking, a page was suddenly torn from the human book. To disinherit humanity of all the great bequests of genius, the stupidity of a copyist or a caprice of a tyrant sufficed. No such danger in the present day. Henceforth the unseizable reigns. * * * Gutenberg is forever the auxiliary of life; he is the permanent fellow workman in the great work of civilization. Nothing is done without him. He has marked the transition of the man slave to the freeman. Try and deprive civilization of him, you become Egypt. The decrease of the liberty of the press is enough to diminish the stature of a people. * * * Gutenberg is like the second father of the creations of the minds. Before him, yes, it was possible for a chef-d'œuvre to die."

I am not quite positive as to whether carpentering or stonecutting or even blacksmithing have been such prominent

features in the progress of civilization as that accorded to printing by Mr. Hugo, but in the estimation of Mr. Howells, I suppose they should come in for an equal share of praise.

Here is still another opinion by F. Hopkinson Smith, the artist author.

"While in Venice last summer an old librarian showed me a volume, and it contained the most exquisite title page I have ever beheld. * * * The man who conceived the Salute and erected the fairy dome, which at morning is an opal, at noon a ruby and at twilight a sapphire, and the man who wrote the Milo were of the same mould and genius as he who took those types in his hands, placed the proper spaces, put a rubricated letter here and a footnote there and all in exact proportions. It seems to me that you who handle the type often miss the keynote of your vocation. Yours is not a trade. It is a fine art—the art of printing."

The true progress of printing has just begun, and with each succeeding year printing is becoming more and more a fine art.

In the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, there is a gallery for the display of the graphic art. Among the large collection are many beautiful specimens; and after an inspection of the collection one cannot help being convinced that printing is an art.—H. E. Johns in American Bookmaker.

THE PERSISTENT MAN.

MONEY and brains, a rare combination, often fails to unlock the door of success. Money can buy the goods which the brain selected, but it takes something more than either to build up a business and gain a reliable foothold in the world. Often the most brilliant minds are anchored to an important, to an impatient, disposition which cannot brook delay or await development. The bright intellect may evolve a good scheme to increase trade, but if the body is unwilling to bestow the tedious labor necessary to carry out the project, nothing is accomplished. Ten men out of a dozen can readily and clearly define what course to pursue to achieve success, but hardly one will have the persistence to faithfully take up in turn the various details which are essential to the result.

The streets of New York and Chicago are lined with smart men who are going down hill. They are men who have intellects above the average, and are well posted in matters of general interest. Many of them have at some time handled round sums of money, and been in business with flattering prospects. They have lived to see what they style "slow men" pass them on the road to wealth, and this in spite of their bright ideas and once ready cash. The simple reason why so few men succeed in business is not because they are not brilliant, but because they are not patient for results.

Building up a business may be likened to a brick wall. Each individual brick must be carefully and faithfully placed, and not until this simple operation has been repeated thousands of times will the wall commence to assume importance. It does not take any extraordinary amount of brains to plan out in a single hour sufficient business plans to consume a year's exertion, but it requires a high degree of persistence to follow out the details six days in the week, and fifty-two weeks in the year.

The opportunities which we often hear about are at our feet and not over our neighbor's fence, as too many imagine. I know a successful business man, past middle age, who has worked his way up from a small beginning. Speaking of his life, he remark-