

I was not a little shocked at being accosted as "the devil" after having been annointed on the countenance with dabs of red, green and blue ink by my predecessor, assisted by several others; but when, picking up a broken type and taking it to one of the men, I was told to "chuck it into the hell-box," associating this with my infernal sobriquet, I construed it as a personal affront and went to the foreman for an explanation, who hinted that I might venture to consult him as a sort of technical glossary as soon as my "footing" should have been paid. This was another poser; it seemed to indicate there was no rest for the sole of my foot in that office until the strong waters had gone down the thirsty gullets of some twenty compositors, who declared that they could never look upon a new apprentice without thirsting for ginger-beer or gore, but that, as they never liked to go to extremes, they usually compromised on the happy medium and took beer—plain beer, without ginger on the one hand or gore on the other. So I returned to the domestic ark and reported to my father, who was shocked to the extent of half a guinea which was spent the next day in bread and cheese, cigars and beer—principally the latter. That night I went home with an olive branch (bot. *Nicotiana*) in my mouth, which I thought I might as well drop at the corner of our street, lest it might not be understood by my father as an emblem of peace; and when I had fluttered into the ark, it pitched and tossed to such a degree that I was sea-sick all night and unable to rise on the following morning. Although I had paid for my footing, I believe to this day I did not get value for my money, for my footing was, if anything, more insecure on the day that I paid for it than it had ever been before.

Tom Fisher, the senior apprentice, had a premonition that he was not expected home that night and that his appearance might lead his mother to suppose that something had happened, and so fell asleep on the bed of the press. One compositor subsided upon a ream of full-sheet posters that had just been printed, and expatiating (chiefly to himself) upon the occasion of the celebration of his own apprenticeship, threw one arm into the ink barrel and defied interference until he had had a snooze, from which he awoke with more than two black eyes. Sim. Stephens predicted an illustrious future for me and promised to teach me the whole trade from beginning to end in less than a fortnight, provided I would roll the keg to where he could reach it without risking collapse by rising in his fatigued condition. Jerry Kickerton, a man of moods with a set of principles and feelings for each, had been standing with his back to the empty fireplace holding forth, for my particular edification, on the rights and wrongs of the working man. As his tongue ran away with the strength of his limbs, he slipped from the mantelpiece bit by bit into the grate, whence he continued to harangue the proprietor who had come to order him home. The foreman, somewhat hilarious and very authoritative, called repeatedly for "order" (interpreted by one of the apprentices as a demand for another glass of beer) while he delivered a speech from notes he was unable to read, to which everyone was good-naturedly deaf. Meanwhile a pressman warbled a comic song, with a face as grave as a sexton's and a voice as pathetic as that of an undertaker presenting his bill. Only "Popsy" Peplow, who had stuck to the ginger pop whence he derived the appellation, went home perfectly sober, and as Popsy was a law unto himself and an anomaly to others, he did not count. He was said to have the "evil eye," which had the one peculiar power of making a man's beer taste flat when he looked upon it, and everybody felt relieved when he left.

Popsy had been kind and obliging to me, and was a manly fellow who did as he pleased and never interfered with others, but secretly I despised him without attempting an analysis of my feelings, so contagious is prejudice. We either admire or hate our superiors, and more often than not "familiarity breeds contempt." The hero is no longer such when he steps down from his pedestal and walks among us on terms of familiarity. We begin to pull him to pieces to find wherein he differ from ourselves. For every point of similarity we mark one for