

suggest, if viewed in a favorable light, that the I. T. U. committee consult with Mr. Cooley in this matter, who appears to take a great interest in the unfortunate typo by thus offering him shelter and a home.

#### STICK AND RULE.

#### The Labors and Trials of a Compositor.

RICHMOND, VA., June 21, 1877.

To the Editor of the *Miscellany*:

SIR,—The following extract contains such a graphic description of the labors and trials of the compositor, that I copy it for the *Miscellany*, feeling confident that it will interest my fellow-craftsmen to read what an old printer and editor thought of the craft, after "an experience of more than fifty years." The extract is taken "from the personal memoirs of one who grew naturally into the position of a journalist, and one of the first who secured prominence in his vocation—Joseph Tinker Buckingham." He was born December 21st 1779, and, after enjoying very meagre educational advantages, commenced his apprenticeship at the printing business, at Walpole, N. H., March 5th, 1796. He went to Boston, Mass., Feb. 5th, 1800, and obtained employment in the office of Manning & Loring, then the principal book printers in the place. I am indebted, for my information and the extract, to a particularly interesting volume of sketches, entitled, "Men and Manners in America One Hundred Years Ago," published by Scribner, Armstrong & Co., New York.

Fraternally, yours,

TEMPLE.

#### THE PRINTING BUSINESS IN BOSTON.

\* \* \* "The reminiscences of a journeyman printer will not be esteemed as very valuable contributions to the literature of the present day. If written out in full, mine would be a volume composed chiefly of notices of hard-laboring contemporaries, of privations and sufferings that the world knew nothing of, of physical and mental, by day and by night, which brought neither wealth nor reputation to the laborer, though it transformed many an illiterate production into a shape fit for the public eye, which would otherwise have been cast aside as discreditable to its author. Many persons who condescend to illumine the dark world with the sparklings of their genius through the columns of a newspaper, and others who publish

sermons and tracts, religious, moral, and political, little think of the labor of the printer, who (perhaps nearly suffocated with the smoke of a lamp, and with an aching head, and eyes inflamed and enfeebled from intense applications,) sits up till midnight, or till daylight, to correct his false grammar, bad orthography, and worse punctuation. I have seen the arguments of lawyers who stood in high repute as scholars sent to the printer in their own handwriting,—chirography which would defy the sagacity of the most inveterate investigator of ancient hieroglyphics—abounding with technical and foreign terms abbreviated, words misspelled, and few (or no) points, and those few entirely misplaced. I have seen sermons of eminent scholars and "divines" sent to the press without points or capitals to designate the division of sentences,—sermons which, if published with the imperfections of the manuscript, would be a disgrace to any apprentice, if he were the author. Some writers use no points whatever; some use a comma for all occasions; some prefer the dash, and use it in place of all other points. I once saw the manuscript of a sermon in the hands of a printer, which was entirely without points, and every line began with a capital letter, as if it had been poetry. Suppose these productions had been printed as they were written. The disgrace would have fallen upon the printer. He would have been called an illiterate block-head, better fitted for a wood-sawyer than a printer; and the author would still enjoy his reputation as a scholar, and receive the sympathy of his readers as a man injured by the printer's ignorance. Nobody would believe that such gross and palpable faults were owing to the carelessness of the author; and no one but a practical printer knows how many hours a compositor, and after him a proof-reader, is compelled to spend in reducing to a readable condition manuscripts which the writers themselves would be puzzled to read with propriety. After an experience of more than fifty years, I "hold this truth to be self-evident," that there is no class of workmen so poorly paid as printers. For one who makes himself rich by printing, disconnected with the business of publishing, fifty barely live above poverty, and die in the possession of little more than enough to pay the joiner for a coffin, and the sexton for a grave. This is, or was peculiarly the lot of journeymen. There are probably not many in the large towns