

CORRESPONDENCE.

The "Art Preservative of all Arts."

PHILADELPHIA, PA., Nov. 10, 1877.

The arguments that I advanced in one of my communications, which appeared in the columns of the *Miscellany* a few months ago, that the above quotation, "the art preservative of all arts," is a "misnomer, a delusion and a cheat," will be again taken up by me, and although I admit that an abler pen than mine could do far more justice to it than I can give it, yet I will attempt, as briefly as my time will allow and your limited space admit, to give further reasons of mine why I have settled down to such convictions. Of course, to combat the almost universal idea that printing is the "art preservative" will require a great deal of elaboration, which I will here have to forego, yet I might possibly convince a few, in advancing my theories, that they are laboring under a mental hallucination on this subject.

The communication alluded to brought out a few responses, as I expected it would, and, to use a common expression, all "went for me" with one exception, which was your Richmond correspondent, who, in a candid manner, admitted that the reading of the communication led him to a new train of thought, and hoped that he would have the pleasure of hearing from me again.

There is no sane man that will attempt to deny the fact that the art of printing is a wonderful invention, the greatest achievement the world ever witnessed, and that during the past half century incalculable improvements have been introduced in all its multitudinous branches. The hand press, which was laboriously worked by the printer, turning out one side of a newspaper at the rate of about two hundred and fifty per hour, has been superceded in most large cities and towns by the lightning presses of Hoe, Walter, and others, which turn out as many complete printed papers in a minute as the former did in an hour; the faces of new types—symmetrical and beautiful to look upon—have been introduced by our enterprising type foundries to take the place of more unsightly ones, multiplying them in numbers and beauty as the years advance. Not wishing to enumerate the list or go into details, we can all admit the fact that a complete revolution has taken place in nearly all the departments of printing during the last five decades. Granting all this,

and much more, yet it does not prove that printing is the "art preservative." It is true that through the newspapers of the day we come in almost daily possession of what is transpiring in the remotest part of the globe; books on history, theology, geology, geometry, the arts and sciences, etc., etc., are printed in almost untold numbers by every Christian nation; speeches of great men are given, sermons of ministers are printed, and everything of note that daily occurs is minutely given through the daily press to enlighten the public and make them wise, but does all this prove that printing is the "art preservative?" What becomes of the myriad of newspapers daily issued, and the thousands of books yearly produced? Do they not all decay, and in time become totally obliterated, with not a vestige left to remind one that they ever had an existence? Who can claim that the products of the press last forever? None. In order to have a living existence they must be re-produced from time to time. And herein proves the fact that printing is not the "art preservative" any more than any other branch of business that can be multiplied and duplicated as occasion requires. It is conceded that the press is a great enlightener of the people, and that it has brought light out of darkness, and also spreads broadcast everything new that is created by the ingenuity of man in all its details; it has, moreover, given to the present generation the history of past generations, so that we exactly know how our forefathers lived and acted on the world's stage that we now occupy, yet with all this great advantage, wherein, again, is it the "art preservative?" What is there that is brought into this world, either by Nature or the handicraft of man, that has a lasting existence? Nothing. Everything, animate and inanimate, has the stamp of decay marked upon it. Nothing is exempt from the ravages of Time. All must give way before it. So must the products of the press, in common with all other things, follow the same immutable laws.

But what would the press be to-day if there was no telegraph, railroads, steamships, etc., to satisfy its fathomless maw. Would it have much weight or power in the world? Very little. Does not the press owe its position to these wonderful inventions. The telegraph and railroad plays just as important a part in the world's progress and advancement as the press. Let an accident overtake the telegraph wires,