

"The late Eli glared hate at the company, and hissed out: 'Master William Caxton, inasmuch as thou and thy brother craftsmen have, or will yet, wrest the larger half of the Kingdom of Darkness from ME, thou and thy successors shall each have a DEVIL at your elbows to the end of time, and mayhap—longer. As for thee, Crook-back Dick of Gloster, I will wait on thee myself. Farewell, Sir Billy and gentles—for the present.'

"Jan hid behind the press; the Abbot fell on his knees; but poor, feeble, brave old Caxton grasped his mallet—hove it at the demon, and—missed; Duke Richard drew his sword and as the first Printer's Devil spread his bat-like wings and plunged head foremost down the abyss Gloster made a fierce stroke at the Enemy. He was a fraction of a second too late to Pye him, but he had the felicity of shearing that self-same hoof from his left leg, gentlemen, of which I told you. That hoof and sword, with the motto, Gloster presented to Caxton, and became the heirloom of my own blood uncle.

"And now, brethren," said Old Pop, "that I have proved that the Old Boy was the first printer's devil, let us irrigate the Sahara at my expense—and flee to Brooklyn."