

the same day, as some simple persons have imagined, but that all the several copies of the book (some three hundred, probably,) were begun on one day and finished on the other day, so that when one copy was completed all were completed. We know that at this date he was only in his sixtieth year, and it seems rather odd that he should complain pathetically of age and feebleness when he was just beginning the career that was to ensure him a perennial reputation, and had nearly twenty years of arduous and prosperous labours before him; but the fact is, in uttering such plaintive murmurs he was but following the fashion of the times, and of times long anterior.

Once successful as a printer, it was impossible for Caxton to do otherwise than devote himself to the art. With the countenance, and, as we may fairly infer, with the assistance of the Duchess of Burgundy, he made use of his materials (or her materials) in printing other books then in demand. One of his first speculations, if not the very first, was the "Game of Chess," which, like the "Historyes of Troye," was a translation of his own from the French, and which he states was "fynysshed the last day of Marche the yer of our Lord God a thousand four hundred and lxxiiij." This is at present the rarest of his books, and the only copies of it in existence are in England. The "Game of Chess," was followed by various other works, though what were the titles of them we do not care to specify, seeing there has been so much disagreement (and no little squabbling) on the question, which most of the biographers seem to have settled entirely to their own satisfaction, if not to that of any one besides. Enough that Caxton carried on the business of a printer in the Low Countries for several years, and that, during a part of the time, at least, he sold in the city of Bruges the production of his press.

The date of Caxton's return to England, furnished with types and the numerous materials that were necessary for