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Linwood Library Gazette

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THE PRINTED WORD AND CIVILIZATION

(continued)

By J. W. BATY

Johann Guttenburg, a German, was the inventor of printing from movable types, at Strasbourg, in 1426, and a Bible printed in Latin, and now in the British Museum, was purchased in 1911 by a buyer of antiques, etc., for £3,800, probably a record price for a book. In 1474 William Caxton, the first English printer, studied printing in Cologne, and printed the first book in England—*The Game and Playe of Chesse*. He returned to England with Colard Mausion in 1476, and in 1477 issued the "*Dictes and Sayinges of the Philosophers*," a folio of 76 leaves, which was the first dated book printed in England. For some time books began to appear, but were very expensive, mainly on account of the limited facilities for production, but in 1889, Otto Mergenthaler, a German-American, startled the world with his invention of the linotype—a machine for casting single letters in one line. It was introduced into England in the same year, and it is largely due to this and similar machines that the production of newspapers and literature is so cheap today. It might be added that the linotype machine produces the equivalent of the work of four hand compositors.

We have arrived at the stage where the manufacture of paper and the product of the linotype need a few more operations to place the printed word before us, and less than fifty years ago illustrations were engraved in wood by hand, and tedious and exacting work this work was to those

employed in that art. The writer was associated with a weekly illustrated journal about 45 years ago where hand engraving was in vogue, and as many as eight men were employed on engraving one page illustration about the size of the "*Freelance*." It was drawn on the wood—and had to be drawn backwards—and divided into sections, and later screwed together. One can imagine the accuracy and skill required to complete the picture! This method was superseded by the introduction of the present method of zinc etching—a photograph of the subject being taken on zinc, and later subjected to acid baths and sprays, which with other treatment produces the wonderful pictures—either in one or more colours—that are reproduced in our books and magazines today. The subject of process-engraving could be dealt with in an article of its own, and we will leave it at that.

The invention of printing machinery, from the hand press used by Caxton (when it took a whole day to print a few pages)—to 1702, when forty sheets per hour was considered a wonderful achievement by the early power-driven presses—and now the production of an average daily newspaper is in the vicinity of 60,000 copies per hour, printed and folded! Great advancement took place in machinery used in the production of commercial, magazine and book printing, and the advent of stereotyping and electro-typing made it possible to make duplicate metal plates of pages of type. Through this latter invention it is claimed by an American firm of publishers that if any book supplied by them runs out of stock that within 24

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Then came with the demand for books, the introduction of book sewing, cover making, cutting and other machinery necessary to cheapen and speed up production—until today the price of books is within the reach of those who wish to obtain them.

The advantages to be gained by the wide distribution of knowledge through the printed word has been such as to bring education on all subjects within the reach of everyone. With the opportunity thus offered all nations are producing the literature of their country for the benefit of their peoples, and the natural sequence to this opportunity is the gain of knowledge—and knowledge is power. The power thus gained made nations greater and more progressive, and this has its reflections in the present condition of the peoples of the world for they have now reached a high degree of culture.

When the forests in Canada were first used for the production of paper pulp, the progress of civilization followed the trail blazed by the axemen—for immense cities sprang up wherever the forests were cleared, and civilization followed in the wake of the uncivilized Red Indian, who a few years previously hunted for his food, and incidentally the scalps of the intruders.

Now that the practical side of the production of the "printed word" has been dealt with, it is unnecessary to refer to the influence of the printed word on mankind save to add that the greatest book ever published is the Bible. Reference has been made to its being one of the first books published in Latin, and the true history of the British Bible begins with Tyndale's translation, to whom, more than any other man, the English Bible is due. Miles Coverdale published the first complete translation of the Bible into English in 1535. Since then it has been printed in over 500 languages, and in 1918 over nine million volumes were issued. During the Great War over eight million copies, covering eighty languages, were distributed ashore and afloat to friends and foes alike by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It will never be denied that the spread of the Gospel throughout the world has been

the greatest factor in advancing civilization, and, when we think of its teachings and records, one does not wonder at its powerful influence on mankind. The records—or most of them—have been translated from hieroglyphics and other signs and symbols—impressions of which were imprinted in stone or other substance—the method used in those days compared with our printed word. The excavations taking place in old-world buried cities are continually adding to our wonder, and should a similar fate overtake some of our present day parts of the world it is questionable how the excavators of a century or so hence will translate some of our records. They will probably conclude, if they come across the modern gramophone records, that we were a people who kept our records by a code of circles, from two inches from the centre to eight inches—more or less—on a disc!—probably regarded as some form of the printed word.

In concluding this article the writer trusts that, although treated technically, it will prove the impression created in the opening sentence that the word "civilisation" is used to describe a state of human society in which people have reached a certain degree of culture" and that through the "Printed Word."

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR

The Chair was much interested in the fine article on "The Printed Word and Civilization" by Mr J. W. Baty, in the November number of our "Gazette." It brought to mind the Alexander Turnbull Library Bulletin No. 4 from which we make the following extract, the title of the matter being "The Story of Printing Traced in Ancient and Modern Books."

The manufacture of manuscript books, though at any time an incalculably laborious process, was speeded up in the monasteries and similar houses of study, by means of having a "lector" who read to a number of scribes. This procedure, by the way, accounts for the great differences in classic texts that have come down to us, for standardized spelling was yet four centuries away, and word forms were more phonetic than regular.

In the days of manuscript books, the custom had not arisen of identifying a book by means of a title-page. Sometimes the title or author was mentioned in the colophon, which was the scribe's ending, generally recording his name, date of completion of the transcription, place, and any other matter related to the book. One amusing colophon is recorded as expressing the relief felt at completing a written volume. "Nunc scripsi totum," he writes, "pro Christo da mihi potum": "Now I have written it all; for Christ's sake give me a drink."

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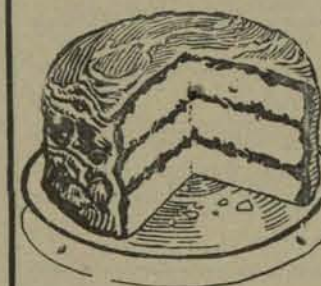
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Linwood Library Gazette

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It is surprising to hear our subscribers continually enquiring for new books. Each month we place on the shelves some two or three hundred new volumes, mostly fiction and they are immediately sought after by readers to the exclusion of many older and better books. Of the vast number of new novels published each year the percentage of books to survive the first edition is lamentably small, yet hosts of fiction readers show a voracious appetite for anything in a new cover. On our shelves are large numbers of books that have proved popular during the past few years—books that are well worth reading. Many of them have been rebound so as to stand up to the wear and tear that much handling entails. We would suggest to our members that a selection of such books will provide many pleasant hours. Perhaps the covers are not so attractive as those of newer novels but we can assure readers that rebound books are invariably some of the best.

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Once again, with the approach of Christmas, we make the suggestion that a yearly subscription to our library is a welcome gift to anyone, young or old. Twelve months of pleasurable reading is a lasting joy and we commend the idea to you.

NON-FICTION BOOKS RECENTLY PLACED ON SHELVES

The Men I Killed. By Brig-General F. P. Crozier, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. In chapter nine we get to the essence of his motive in writing this book. Not for him the glorification of the cruelties of war, but a stern resolve, that come what may, he will do what he can to make the fomenting of a war spirit impossible. No longer was the soldier able to find strength or reason in fighting for "victory" for such a state no longer exists; instead is a period of useless slaughter, of soldiers and civilians, the breeding of hate, anguish and misery, for not only the nations engaged, but the whole wide world. Nearly 2000 years ago, the poorest Man and the greatest Pacifist left us His Gospel. Still the nations kill each other, and the author suggests we try the 2000 year old message, and though our effort to walk the straight road may not be perfect, we shall be in good company and doing our bit to straighten things out.

The chapter on Military Religion is well calculated to get under the skin of many people, but it expresses the opinion of multitudes of thinkers. Dealing with the Triple Alliance of Army, Navy and Church, he gives us a burning outpouring of an earnest mind opposed to the shams and hypocrisy so obvious today. He says their first and strongest loyalty is to Caesar and not to Christ, and the only remedy is to dethrone Caesar and to enthrone Christ individually, nationally and racially. He asks, are the Christian Churches powerless to avert catastrophe? powerless to lead? Not if they are really Christian for the way has been clear for 2000 years, and goes on to suggest that the matter lies

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largely in the hands of the ordinary people, by taking the "defence" out of the hands of the professional militarists and to associate themselves with a universal plan of peace construction, by the elimination of such causes of international strife as trade barriers, restricted national wealth, exchange manipulation, profiteering, and colonial claims, quoting three soldiers who have been brave and honest enough to say so, i.e., Field Marshall Sir Wm. Robertson, Lord Allenby, and General Sir Ian Hamilton. The only way civilization can be saved is for the Christian Churches to prove their claim to that title and march towards pacifism.

The title of the book is suggestive (for under military law he was doing his duty to check sudden panic, but it is the satanic nature of war, ruling war ethics, that is criticised by the author for now he can see no use for war in any shape or form) for it is one of the "duties" of officers in command to decide in a flash, to take a soldier's life. The chapter on Military Religion is a scathing, shattering indictment of the powers in authority.

The evident sincerity of the author adds power and strength to the book and parts of it, at all events, were written under tense strain.

Hell's Broth Militia. By W. J. Blackledge. A very popular writer of life in Foreign Legion—he now gives us an insight into the rough and risky life of a sojourn with an irregular force in the mysterious hill country that lies beyond the North West Frontier Province of India. This part of the world is only favoured with the spotlight of publicity when an Afghan King is assassinated, or there is a revolutionary outbreak on a big scale and the "regulars" are turned out in battle order for a "demonstration." But little of the skirmishes and engagements which occur almost daily ever reaches the outer world. Yet, it is just the efficient handling of these every-day jobs, the policing of no-man's-land beyond the Khyber, that keeps the northern gate of India secure against the horrors of stampeding revolution.

A book with a kick in it.

J.H.

Moscow. By Lion Feuchtwanger. The author tells us he set out as a sympathetic visitor but yet mistrustful of Moscow, and that his doubts were confirmed by a little book by André Gide ("Back from the U.S.S.R.") which appeared just before his departure.

This gives a good start to the reader and interest will be sustained as he further peruses the book. He contrasts Trotsky and Stalin in forceful words. His conclusion is that a building is being erected, much debris and scaffolding, but the framework is rising clear and well defined, full of promise, not to bring the people nearer the sky, but the sky nearer to the people. He sees success and comparing it with the doubts and failures of other peoples, he is glad of the opportunity to show his appreciation by writing this book.

RECENT NOVELS

Who Killed Oliver Cromwell? By Leonard R. Gribble. Stephen Ironsides, fraudulent financier, claimed to be like Oliver Cromwell in character. Someone dressed as Oliver Cromwell was stabbed at a fashionable masked ball. Ironsides had secured an invitation to that ball, his social ambitions being such as are usually attributed to parvenus' wives rather than to parvenus. But, although he went as Oliver Cromwell, the reader must not assume he will appear no more. For Ironsides had at least one alias, and at least one double (at £5 a week): also he had undergone facial surgery to become like a fourth party.

Who then was murdered and who was murderer? One more person was murdered and three kidnapped, including the aristocratic girl whom Ironsides had meant to marry, and also including the young man she preferred. So it is not surprising that Inspector Slade hardly understood the complicated plot he was trying to baffle. He shows a good deal of ingenuity, though his author allows him considerable luck in intercepting telephone calls.

—Times Literary Supplement.

The Ghosts of Perranprah. By Hugh Lea. Perranprah Cove is south or south-west of Truro, and has a whirlpool fully as dangerous as the Maelstrom. In it can be heard the yells of the ghost of Sir Rowland de Causeys, who also lights misleading lights in his old tower on Beacon Head. So when Hurst vanished from his hotel in the neighbouring little port of Lanson, local people mostly thought the ghost was to blame. But Meadows, the artist, another guest at the hotel, telephoned to his old schoolfellow Wilmot at Scotland Yard and did so suspiciously quickly.

He, Wilmot, Sergeant Barrett and the Cornish Inspector Slanning had an adventurous week exploring haunted caves, interviewing Sir William Waller at his sanatorium for drug-addicts close to Beacon Head, and detecting signs of non-ghostly use in the beacon itself. One would expect a Scotland Yard man's attitude to ghosts would be either pure scepticism or psychical research, but Wilmot is surprisingly nervous when anything uncanny occurs. However, Sir Rowland never appears, and the three policemen unravel the complex set of events which led someone to want Hurst out of the way.

JUVENILE SECTION

New Books for the Month

To the Fore with the Tanks . . . P. F. Westerman
Buckle of Submarine V2 Rowland Walker
Treasure at Sonnach Duncan Sinclair
Between Two Schools Harold Avery
The Book of England G. E. Milton
Derelicts of the Sea Stanley Rogers
Deville McKeene Rowland Walker
The Boy Who Loved the Sea . . . Mary H. Wade
The Fight for Honour Bernard Bowles
The Airship "Golden Hind" . . . P. F. Westerman
Adventures Underground T. C. Bridges
Dastral of the Flying Corps . . . Rowland Walker
Wings over the Atlantic A. D. Divine
The Vanished Yacht H. Burrage
Jungle Birds C. L. Edholm
The Secret Battleplane P. F. Westerman

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Brynild H. G. Wells
Call McLean Geo. Goodchild
The Clouded Moon Max Saltmarsh
The Detector Alec Lumsden
Disappearance of Roger Tremayne Bruce
Graeme
Fay Draper Mairi O'Nair
Felo de se? R. Austin Freeman
Four Callers in Razor Street .. Sydney Fowler
Futile Pursuit Phyllis M. Wilson
The Ghosts of Perranprah Hugh Lea
Instruments of Darkness Sydney Horler
Invitation to Kill Gardner Low
In the Grip of the Brute Garnett Radcliffe
Island of Spies J. M. Walsh
Jane of Lantern Hill L. M. Montgomery
Jacinth Denis Mackail
Little Valley Raymond Otis
Lingering Melody Dorothy B. Upson
The Little Man Ruby M. Ayres
The Lone Cowboy C. L. Edholm
The Man from Madagascar . Francis D. Grierson
Men Are Such Fools F. Baldwin
Murder Germ Capt. A. O. Pollard
Murder Before Tuesday Elaine Hamilton
The Mysterious Mr 1 H. S. Keeler
Mystery Cruise Taffrail
Nine Lives Mark Channing
Nobody Asked Me Mary Burchell
A Row of Stars Jane Abbott
The Poisonous Pen Ottwell Binns
Saturday Star Deirdre O'Brien
Second-hand Cinderella Constance M. Evans
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