

GIVE THIS JOURNAL TO A FRIEND

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"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

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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 This method was superseded by the introduction of the present method of zinc etching—a photograph of the subject being taken on zinc, and later subjected to acid baths and sprays, which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