

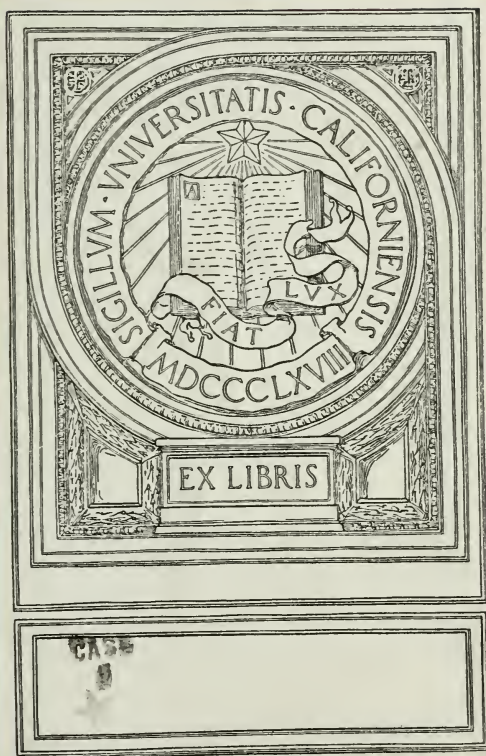
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Wm. Blades
1925

SOME EARLY
TYPE SPECIMEN BOOKS

OF

ENGLAND,
HOLLAND, FRANCE, ITALY,
AND GERMANY.

CATALOGUED BY

WILLIAM BLADES,

WITH

EXPLANATORY REMARKS.

Reprinted from the "Printers' Register."

LONDON :
1875.

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ANNOUNCER

EARLY TYPE SPECIMEN BOOKS.

INFORMATION upon Early Type Specimen Books is only to be obtained from the books themselves, and as they are very seldom to be met with, I feel that the many imperfections of the following sketch will be readily excused. At the same time it is urgently requested that any reader who may be able to add to, or correct, the information here given will favour the writer with a communication.

Books have their fates as well as nations, and the certain doom of many a fair volume is utter destruction. Those of an ephemeral character, or such as soon become obsolete, have to pass through what, with literal truth, may be called a *fiery* ordeal. That is when they become too antiquated to be of any value to the current generation and yet require a century to pass over their heads before they have any merit in the eyes of the antiquarian. Perhaps no class of books is more subject to this unkind destiny than the specimens issued by Type-founders, which soon become so worthless in the very eyes of their own parents, that large editions entirely disappear and "leave no track behind," even in the very foundries which gave birth to them. I imagine it to be as true of the Continental as it is of the old English foundries, that not one of them can show a copy of their first specimen books. It may therefore be of some interest to make a note of such specimens anterior to the year 1820 as I have been able to meet with, confining myself to those issued in our own country.

When printers were their own type-founders their works were their own type-specimens; but soon after the spread of the art through Europe printers were found who were willing to cut punches and cast for their brethren. When William Caxton, about 1476, erected his press just outside

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the walls of the Abbey at Westminster, his whole stock of type consisted of one fount of Great Primer—so tottering were the steps of the infant art which was in after years to rule the world! This fount he purchased in the Low Countries and brought with him to England. When it began to wear he procured a new fount of the same, with a small fount of larger size for headings; but whether Caxton at any period of his career cast his own letter seems now impossible to ascertain with any certainty.

The first positive notice we have of type-founding in England is the fount of Saxon cut by John Day for Archbishop Parker, and used in 1567. The next is found in a Decree of the Star Chamber in 1637, restricting the foundries in England to four, and further restricting each master-founder to two apprentices and one boy “to pull off the knots of metal hanging at the end of the letters when they are first cast,” *and no more*. At this period our native types were very coarse, and we were far surpassed by the Dutch, from whom, indeed, our founders often purchased matrices, but even then could not cast so well. All the specimens of type at this period were printed on sheets, as a broadside; and several, both English and Dutch, are in the miscellaneous collection of John Bagford in the British Museum. The earliest, probably issued in the first half of the seventeenth century, appears to be a Dutch specimen printed for use in England. It consists of a complete alphabet, upper and lower, of the following sizes, except the first four, of which, on account of their size, three letters only were given:—Fatt Cannon, French Cannon, Lean Cannon, Two-Line English, Double Pica, Great Primer, English, Pica, Long Primer, and Brevier. (*sic.*)

The first *dated* type-specimen is a sheet of Moxon's, who was the earliest English writer on the practice of type-founding and printing. His sheet is headed thus:—

Proves of several Sorts of Letters Cast by Joseph Moxon. Westminster. Printed by Joseph Moxon in Russel Street at the signe of the Atlas, 1669.

The founts shown are Great Cannon Romain, Double Pica and Great Primer Romain, English Romain and Italica, and the same for Pica, Long Primer, and Brevier,

two small flowers for borders completing the list. All the types are poor in face and uneven in line, not at all coming up to those of the contemporary Dutch founders, Christopher van Dijk or Voskens, whose specimens are also in the same collection. Yet Moxon could tell the whole world how types should be shaped, and seven years later issued the following work, of which copies are now very rare :—

Regulæ trium Ordinum Litterarum Typographicarum; or the Rules of the Three Orders of Print Letters; viz., the Roman, Italick, and English; Capitals and Small. 4to., London, 1676.

At the end of the volume are thirty-eight engraved plates of Alphabets, each letter made of “geometrick figures” showing the true shape which type-founders and others should adopt. It is this rigid adherence to rule and measure which has deprived Moxon’s types of any approach to artistic excellence.

The next English specimen proceeded from Oxford, to which learned University Dr. John Fell and Mr. F. Junius gave a considerable foundry, with all the tools and appliances. This is the heading :—

A Specimen of the Several Sorts of Letter given to the University by Dr. John Fell, sometime Lord Bishop of Oxford. To which is added the Letter given by Mr. F. Junius. Printed at the Theater, Oxford, A.D. 1695.*

This was published as a half-sheet 8vo., and at the end is a catalogue of the numerous “punchions,” moulds, and matrices which form part of the gift. They are still preserved at the Clarendon Press, Oxford. The same press issued the following :—

A Specimen of Several Sorts of Printing Types belonging to the University of Oxford, at the Clarendon Printing House. 4to. 1768.

In this specimen we have not only the letter cast by the University in their own foundry, but several founts of Roman and Italic purchased in London of Caslon I.

* This is the Doctor upon whom the well-known lines were written :—

I do not love thee, Dr. Fell—
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this alone I know full well,
I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.

As already seen, English typé-founding was in a very depressed state until an accidental circumstance induced the first Mr. Caslon to try his hand at punch-cutting. This was in 1720, upon a fount of Arabic for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and his complete success in this determined his future life. He started an infant foundry, cutting his punches with his own hand, and in 1734 published the following as a Large Post Broadside :—

A Specimen by William Caslon, Letter Founder in Chiswell Street, London.

This sheet is very interesting as showing from what a small commencement this celebrated foundry took its rise. The following is a complete list of the founts :—Titling Letter : Capitals only, 7 sizes. Roman : ranging from French Canon to Pearl, each with its Italic, 14 founts. Black Letter : only Pica and Brevier. Saxon : Pica and Long Primer. Greek : English, Pica, Long Primer, and Brevier, 4 founts. Hebrew : 2 founts—one with points. Eastern : Gothic, Coptic, Armenian, and Samaritan, 1 fount Pica of each. Syriac and Arabic, 1 fount English of each. This makes a total of 38 founts all told, not including 7 varieties of flowers. The date at foot of the sheet is 1734. In the Chiswell Street foundry is preserved an interesting oil painting, three-quarter length, representing Caslon I. with this very specimen-sheet in his hand. We must not dismiss this patriarchial specimen without noticing the well-known oration—“*Quousque tandem abutere, Catalina, patientia nostra?*” Many a printer has wondered why all the English founders for nearly a century adopted this speech for the display of their book-founts. It was a favourite quotation in the House of Commons at a time when a spice of Latin in the speech of a member was supposed to show a classical education, and was used for the first time in this specimen-sheet in 1734. Although the beautiful faces in all our modern foundries are now, from their very number and excellence, a source of some embarrassment to the master-printer, it was at that time, when there were few artistically-cut types, considered a matter of great importance to obtain a fount of letter both well cut and well cast ; and the learned author would often take the

arm of his learned printer, and examine, in the sanctum of the type-founder, the smoke-proofs of his newly-cut punches, the excellence of which would be of mutual advantage. Probably on such an occasion was the long used "Quousque tandem" suggested to Mr. Caslon, who was quite alive to the fact that all types show better in Latin than in English.

In 1743 the Harlem firm of Isaac and John Enschede originated the plan of presenting their patrons with a well-bound and well-printed volume, in which their types were advantageously displayed. In 1764 Mr. Caslon, who had then taken his son into partnership, issued the first type-specimen book seen in England in the same form. Its title is as follows :—

A Specimen of Printing Types by William Caslon and Son. Printed by Dryden Leach. London, 1764.

At the end is : "This new foundry was begun in the year 1720, and finished 1763; and will (with God's leave) be carried on, improved, and enlarged by William Caslon and Son, Letter Founders, in London."

Two years later Caslon I. died, and the same year the following book was issued in 8vo. by Caslon II. :—

A Specimen of Printing Types by William Caslon, Letter Founder, Printed by John Towers. 8vo. London, 1766.

This, and the reprint given by Luckombe in his "History of Printing," p. 133, are sometimes mistaken for the issue of Caslon I. They were succeeded by :—

A Specimen of Printing Types by William Caslon, Letter Founder to His Majesty. London: 1785.

This was on two sheets of Large Post Folio in double column, and of course issued by Caslon II.

Leaving the Caslons, I will only just mention the foundry established about 1750 by the famous Baskerville of Birmingham. It is doubtful whether any specimen-book was issued; and after a short but most brilliant career the whole plant was sold to Beaumarchais, who wished to print Voltaire's works from Baskerville types. It was afterwards removed to Paris, and was probably absorbed by one of the

large Parisian foundries. It would be interesting to printers on both sides of the English Channel to know the ultimate fate of these favourite founts; and I am sure a few lines from any one who has the information would find welcome acceptance from the editor of either *L'Imprimerie* or *Typologie Tucker*:

In 1710 Thomas James, son of the Vicar of Basingstoke, began a foundry with a set of matrices, which with great difficulty he obtained from Holland. His letters concerning this transaction are most amusing and are published by Rowe Mores in his "Dissertation." His son continued the business in Bartholomew-close, but in 1782 the whole plant was sold by auction and a specimen issued as follows:—

A Catalogue and Specimen of Mr. James's Type-foundry improved by Edward Rowe Mores. 8vo. London, 1782.

I have not been able to see a copy of this Catalogue.

Specimen of Printing Types by John Baine. 8vo., Edinburgh, 1787.

With which, as the two foundries had a common origin, we will mention—

A Specimen of Printing Types cast in the Letter Foundry of Alexander Wilson & Sons. 4to., Glasgow, 1789.

Passing by the early biographical particulars in the lives of John Baine and Alexander Wilson, suffice it to say that, struck with the idea of improving the art of Printing by a new stereotyping process, they joined partnership in a type-foundry, which was started in St. Andrew's, Scotland, in 1742, being the first in that country. There is little doubt that a specimen-sheet of Wilson & Baine was issued, as their foundry was soon in full work, and supplied the best printers in Scotland; but no copy has yet come under my notice. In 1744 they removed to Glasgow, where facilities for trade were greater. In 1747 Mr. Baine went to Dublin with the intention of establishing there a branch business. In 1749 the partnership was dissolved, Mr. Wilson remaining at Glasgow, where those beautiful types were produced which have gained a European renown for the press of the Foulis Brothers. Mr. Baine came back to Scotland and settled at Edinburgh, from which city the specimen

mentioned by Rowe Mores as being "very pretty" must have been issued. About 1777 he went over to America, in which country he died. On the death of Mr. Wilson the Glasgow foundry was carried on by his two sons, and in 1830 descended to the grandson, Alexander Wilson, and in 1850 became incorporated with the Caslon Foundry. Mr. Wilson removed to London, and on the 7th November, 1874, departed this life.

Specimen of Printing Types by Vincent Figgins, Letter Founder, Swan Yard, Holborn Bridge, London, 1793. Printed by T. Bensley. 8vo.

Looking at the world-wide fame of the present foundry of Messrs. Vincent and James Figgins, this, the first specimen-book issued by the founder of the firm, has great interest. I have never heard of another copy, and that now before me appears to be imperfect, wanting apparently two or three leaves of Roman types, probably taken out for trade use by the original owner, John Nichols, the learned printer. There seem to have been only seven founts of Roman and thirty-one founts of Hebrew, Greek, Æthiopic, Samaritan, and Saxon. These Eastern types always made a great show in the early foundries, whether English or foreign, and suggest a very different class of book-work to that now prevalent. The following sentences from the preface will be read with interest:—"VINCENT FIGGINS having had the advantage of ten years' instruction and servitude under the late ingenious Mr. Joseph Jackson (great part of which time he had the management of his foundry), flatters himself he shall not be thought arrogant in soliciting the patronage of the MASTER PRINTERS and other literary gentlemen when he informs them that he has commenced an entire NEW LETTER FOUNDRY; every branch of which, with their support and encouragement, he hopes he shall be enabled to execute in the most accurate and satisfactory manner; assuring them that his best endeavours shall be exerted to complete so arduous an undertaking. Although as yet he has but few founts finished, he is anxious to submit a specimen for approbation. All orders he may be favoured with shall be duly attended to and

punctually executed. The italics of the following founts, with a Long Primer, Brevier, and English, are in great forwardness.

The Mr. Jackson mentioned above was an apprentice of Caslon I., and a very good punch-cutter, who began business as a type-founder in 1763. He was continually adding to his foundry, which eventually was very extensive. In 1790 the premises, which were in Cock-lane, near Smith-field, were destroyed by fire; and although to a great extent they were re-instated in the course of two years, Mr. Jackson never recovered from the shock, and died in 1792. Mr. Figgins then began business on his own account in Swan-yard, Holborn, and soon made his foundry famous by many beautiful specimens. (See Nichol's *Lit. Anecdotes*, p. 361.)

Specimen of Printing Types by Joseph Fry and Sons. 4to., London, 1795.

Specimen of Metal Cast Ornaments curiously adjusted to paper, by Edmund Fry and Isaac Steele, Letter Founders to the Prince of Wales. London, 1794.

Specimen of Printing Types by Fry and Steele, Type Founders to the Prince of Wales, Type Street. 8vo. London, 1795.

Specimen of Printing Types by Edmund Fry, Letter Founder to the King and Prince Regent, Type Street. 8vo. London, 1816.

Specimen of Printing Types by Edmund Fry, Letter Founder to the King and Prince Regent, Type Street. 8vo. London, 1824.

In 1764 a foundry was begun in Type Street, Chiswell Street by Fry and Pine, their founts being imitations of those cut by Baskerville. In 1785 the firm was Joseph Fry; in 1794, Fry and Steele; in 1816, Edmund Fry; and in 1823, Edmund Fry and Son. Although the "ornaments curiously adjusted to paper" are very coarse to the eyes of modern printers, the types are very good and pleasing. What became of this foundry?

Specimen of Improved Printing Types. Robert Thorne. London, 1803.

Mr. Thorne was also an apprentice of Mr. Jackson's, and carried on a successful foundry in the Barbican, which he afterwards removed to Fann Street. To this founder is

chiefly owing the introduction of very fat-faced letters. Upon his death, about 1824, his business was purchased by Mr. Thorowgood. The firm was in 1844 Robert Besley and Co., and is now Reed and Fox.

Specimen of Printing Types by W. Caslon and Son, Letter Founders to the King. London, 1803.

Shortly before 1792, William Caslon, grandson to the original founder of the house, seceded from the firm, and having, upon the death of the Mr. Jackson, noticed above, purchased at public auction his entire plant, he removed it to Finsbury-square, where he carried on a very successful trade, especially in the ornamental part of type-founding. He was the first to be honoured with the Royal appointment, and is stated by Hansard to have produced in 1785 the best specimen seen up to that period. His son, whom we may call Caslon IV., was in partnership with him in 1803, and succeeded entirely to the business in 1807. In 1819 the whole plant was disposed of to Messrs. Blake and Co., of Sheffield, and removed to that town, where it formed the foundation of that celebrated foundry.

To dissect these different foundries, to describe the change of taste and fashion, and especially to narrate the causes which gave birth to many of the founts, would, however interesting, be too long a task and embrace no inconsiderable portion of the literary history of the eighteenth century. There are many interesting specimen-books which I have been unable to obtain, and I conclude this portion of the subject with an earnest request, especially to old-established country printers, to look at their specimens, and to be good enough to inform me of any they may possess differing either in name or edition from those already noted ; a favour which will be gratefully acknowledged.

AMERICAN SPECIMEN BOOKS.

Christopher Lower, a German, living in Germantown, Pennsylvania, cast German types and printed the Bible and other works in the German language about 1735. His foundry and printing-office appear to have died with him. A foundry at Boston by Mr. Mitchelson, from Scotland,

and another by Mr. Buer in Connecticut, were alike unsuccessful. In 1775 Dr. Franklin brought from France to Philadelphia the materials for a foundry, but no use was made of them, and they finally came into the possession of Messrs. Binney and Ronaldson.

We have already mentioned John Baine, the Edinburgh type-founder. Upon the close of the revolutionary war, he sent a foundry over to Philadelphia under the charge of a relative, probably his grandson, and soon after followed *in propria persona*. This was the first regular type-foundry in the United States.

Baine died in 1790, and his grandson returned to England. It seems probable that a specimen book or sheet of this foundry, which was in successful work for about fifteen years, was issued, but I cannot hear of any. Indeed, the only one I have met with in the eighteenth century is the following:—

Specimen of Types by Isaiah Thomas. 4to, Worcester, Mass., 1785.

This title is taken from the Catalogue of the Library of the American Antiquarian Society, a Society founded by Isaiah Thomas, who presented to it his own extensive library. Even this is, in all probability only a specimen of imported types, as Thomas does not appear to have been a founder further than casting for himself particular sorts when urgently required.

The following titles are also from the same Catalogue:—

Specimen of Printing Types by J. Ronaldson. 8vo. Philadelphia, 1816.

This firm started in 1728 as Binney and Ronaldson, and issued their first specimen-book in 1812. It was subsequently famous as the Johnson Foundry, and is now under the management of MacKellar, Smiths and Jordan.

Specimen of Printing Types by E. White. 8vo. New York, 1817.

Elihu White was one of the earliest type-founders in the United States. He began to found at New York in 1810, and soon after established foundries both in Cincinnati and Buffalo. The business being very successful partners were taken in, and in 1835 a beautiful specimen-book was issued

under the firm of White, Hagar and Co., now trading as Hagar and Co.

Specimen of Printing Types by David and George Bruce. 8vo., New York, 1818.

The first specimen-book of this firm was issued in 1815, and according to Ringwalt's Encyclopædia, consisted of only fifteen plain faces ranging from Pearl to Great Primer. George Bruce was the first to introduce the newspaper size called by Americans "Agate," which comes between Nonpareil and Pearl.

Perhaps some of our Typographic brethren in America will favour us with an accurate transcript of the titles of their early specimens and a resumé of their contents.

FOREIGN SPECIMEN BOOKS.

We have now to notice some specimens published in various parts of the Continent, many of them intimately connected with the History of Printing in England.

It is puzzling to find that several of the earliest sheets of types give no intimation whatever of the founder or where the printer (for whose use they must have been issued) might obtain them. Such is a Large Post broadside in the Bagford collection, where one Roman and Italic alphabet and one fount of black are spread out to cover the whole sheet. This seems very early and is probably Dutch. As guess-work, however, is very unsatisfactory, we will describe no more nameless specimens (of which there are several in the same collection), but pass on to the earliest we have seen with a fixed date:—

*Typorum et Characterum officine Chalcographæ, Georgii-Leopoldi Fuhrmanni * * * designatio. 4to. Nurembergæ, 1616.*

"A representation of the types and characters in the printing office of G. L. Fuhrmann." The introduction gives an account of the origin of printing and the names of its greatest benefactors, followed by the "Printers' Complaint," in Latin verse, by the celebrated H. Stephanus. The founts comprise six sizes of Black, ten of Roman and Italic, two Greek, four Music, with Initials and Ornaments.

Fuhrmann was a well-known printer in Nuremberg, and there is a curious cut on the title-page showing the interior of his press-room, with a large broadsword hanging on the side of the press. What a modern pressman would do with such a bar, screw, frisket and tympan as are here displayed, I cannot imagine. Near the press is a kind of clothes-horse with moveable poles, and sheets hanging on them to dry.

Indice de Caratteri esistenti nella Stampa Vaticana. 4to. In Roma, 1628.

This is a specimen-book of all the founts then in the foundry and printing office of the Vatican, edited by Cardinal Barberino. Considering the coarse paper, the impression is very good, and displays twenty-three Archaic alphabets, such as Samaritan, Rabbinical, &c., thirty-six Roman and Italic, only one Hebrew, six Greek, and four Music. As might be expected, there are no fancy letters nor blacks, and not even titling or illuminated capitals. The whole were cast in the Papal foundry, many of them purposely for the Missionaries of the Propaganda. My copy has the following autograph :—"Domus Prof. Rom. Soc. Jesu B. Com.," showing that it belonged once to the Jesuit College at Rome. The celebrated Bodoni learnt his art in this printing office.

Proeven van Letteren die gesneden zijn door Wyleu Christoffel van Dijck, welke gegoten werden by Jan Bus, ten huuse van Sr. Joseph Athias, woonst in de Swanenburg-stract, tot Amsterdam, (ante 1700).

A Demy Broadside exhibiting in four columns five founts Titling, sixteen Roman and Italic, eight Black, and two Music. These were all cut by Van Dijck and cast in the foundry of Jos. Athias by John Bus. Christopher van Dijck had a European fame in the seventeenth century as an artistic punch-cutter. Although sober, practical old Moxon was a long way behind in his own attempts at that art, one can sympathise with the hearty and simple admiration he expresses for artistic beauty in another. Speaking of the letters cut by Van Dijck, he descants with almost a lover's ardour upon the charms of their "faces,"

with "the true placing of their fats and their leans," and "the sweet driving them into one another, and indeed all the accomplishments which could render letter regular and beautiful." Van Dijck was an independent punch-cutter, and worked for various founders, some of whom were unable to do justice to his punches, either in striking the matrices or casting the letter. So Athias, in this specimen, mentions John Bus, to prove that matrices and moulds were by a skilful workman. At that time the Dutch made all their moulds of brass. Joseph Athias, who gave so cold a reception to Mr. James when he wished to buy matrices of him, and is described as "one of the most sly and jealous people that ever I saw in my life," was a Jewish Rabbi as well as Typefounder, Printer, and Publisher at Amsterdam. He succeeded to the Elzevier foundry, and in 1662-63 issued a celebrated edition of the Old Testament, printed with the most beautiful Hebrew types till then seen, which were cut specially for that purpose by Van Dijck. Upon the death of Athias the foundry passed through several hands, and at last was purchased in 1767 by John Enschede, of Haarlem, in whose family it still remains.

There is another sheet in the British Museum, issued about 1680, without any name, giving four founts of Titling, seventeen Roman and Italic, one Greek, eight Dutch, and two Music. All are well cut, and at the foot is a note intimating that other founts may be had "door C. van Dyk, gesneden," *i.e.*, cut by C. van Dijck.

Proeven van Letteren dewelcke gegooten worden by Mr. Johannes Rolu, Lettu-Snyder woonende tot Amsterdam in de laetste Lely dwars-straet. c. 1710.

"Proofs of Types cast by Mr. John Rolu, Letter Cutter, living at Amsterdam in the Laetste Lely dwars-straet. This Broadside is interesting as bringing under our notice the very Punch-cutter about whom Thomas James wrote so curious an account to his brother when he went matrix hunting at Amsterdam in 1710, and brought back with him thirty sets of matrices, which were used for a long time in his London foundry. Mr. Rowe Mores spells his name Rolij, but in this specimen it is plainly Rolu.

Proef van Letteren die te bekomen zyn by de Weduwe van Joannis Adamsz. en Abraham Ente, Lettergieter in de nuwe Lely-straat in de Batavier, tot Amsterdam. (1700?)

This "proof" of types, cast by the widow of John Adam's Son and Abraham Ente, makes two Large Post broadsides, offering eighteen founts of Roman and Italic, from Double Pica to Nonpareil. Although the faces are well cut, this foundry does not seem to have ranked high, for it is not mentioned by any writer as among the Amsterdam foundries, which at that time were numerous. Mr. James may have known it, as he speaks of visiting *all* the typefounders of Amsterdam, then the chief centre of the art in Europe. *Tempora mutantur*—now I believe there is not one.

Proeve der Drukkerye van Mr. Abraham Elzevier, In sijn Leven Drukker van de Universiteyt tot Leyden. 4to. Leyden, 1713.

This was the sale catalogue of the celebrated printing-office and type-foundry of Abraham Elzevier, the second of that name, printer to the University of Leyden, who died July 30th, 1712. He was the last of this family of printers, and upon his death the foundry and printing-office were sold by public auction; but money being at that time very scarce, the whole produced only 2,000 florins, and passed into various hands.

*Schrift-Probe * * welche in Herrn Bernhard Christoph Breilkopfs Schriftgiesserey allhier befindlich sind. 8vo. Leipsig, 1739.*

In the preface we read that "Men should note that in this foundry of B. C. Breilkopf all the types have been cut in steel," meaning, probably, that they engraved all their own punches and did not buy strikes from other founders. There are twenty-two founts of Gothic letter; eight Titling Caps; ten Roman, with an Italic to each; two Hebrew; and three Greek. The names of the various punch-cutters are mentioned, viz., Joh: Peter Artopäo; And. Koler, of Nurenberg; Christian Zingk, of Wittenberg; and Joh: Caspar Müller, of Leipsig.*

* This notice by name of the artists to whom the credit is due for any beauty the types may possess is a custom much to be commended.

*Versameling van een Party curieuse Letteren * * * nagelaten op de Drukkery de Heer Rudolph Wetstein. 4to. Amsterdam, 1743.*

This is a curious collection of types of all kinds in the printing-office of the late Rudolph Wetstein. They were sold on Wednesday, March 1743, in the Fleshmarket, Amsterdam, together with the foundry which produced them, to the brothers Enschede, who translated them to Haarlem, where they formed the foundation of that celebrated foundry.

*Schrijft-Proben * * * wie solche zu Wittenberg in C. Zinckens Giesserey, befindlich sind. 8vo., 1743.*

This specimen of the types in the Zincken foundry at Wittenberg is found in Gessner's "Buchdruckerkunst," 8vo. Leipsig, 1743. It contains thirty-three founts of German, thirty of Roman and Italic, four Hebrew, four Greek, and a few Eastern characters. Christian Zinck, as already noted, cut some founts for the Breitkopf foundry.

Proef van Letteren, welke gegoten worden in de Nieuwe Lettergieterij van Izaak en Joh. Enschede te Haerlem. 8vo. 1743.

This I take to be the earliest specimen-book issued by this celebrated foundry, which is still in full vigour at Haerlem. The above title is adapted from the second edition, as the title page in my copy of the first is unfortunately wanting, although the wood-cut representing Koster, and the original preface, are there. The latter refers to the purchase of the Wetstein foundry as the foundation of this.

Proef van Letteren, welke gegoten worden in de Nieuwe Lettergieterij van Izaak en Joh. Enschede te Haerlem. 8vo. 1748.

This, the second issue of the Enschede brothers, is excellently printed and adorned with portraits.

Proef van Letteren, welke gegoten worden in de Nieuwe Lettergieterij van Izaak en Joh. Enschede te Haerlem. Derde Uytgave. 8vo. 1757.

This "derde Uytgave," or third edition, has an introduction of six pages, giving a short account of the foundry. An engraved frontispiece, with Coster's bust on a pedestal.

Les Caractères de l'Imprimerie par Fournier le Jeune. 8vo. Paris, 1764.

A charming little volume of 170 leaves, containing a great variety of founts, most of them cut by Fournier the Elder. With the addition of preliminary and postliminary matter, it formed the second volume of the "Manuel de l'Imprimerie," published two years later by Fournier le Jeune. Fournier's foundry was then the most ancient in France. Guillaume le Bé commenced it in 1552, and about 1561 purchased the "plant" of the celebrated Garamond. It passed on with credit through the hands of Guillaume le Bé, the son, and G. de Bé, the grandson, and was for some time carried on by the widow of the last-named, who died in 1707. Up to 1732 her four sons kept up the business, and their manager was Fournier the elder, who was an excellent punch-cutter and greatly increased the foundry. Into his hands it eventually came, and descended to Fournier le Jeune.

Epreuve des Caractères qui se gravent et fondent dans la fonderie de J. F. Rosart. 2^e édition. Avec portraits. 8vo. Bruxelles, 1768.

This specimen, which is in the Booksellers' Library, Amsterdam, I have not seen, nor do I know the date of the first edition. The foundry of J. F. Rosart was purchased upon his death by the brothers Enschede.

*Proef van Letteren * * * in de * * * Letter gieterij van J. Enschede. 8vo. Haarlem 1768.*

This edition is illustrated with several portraits—Coster, the reputed inventor of Printing, Junius, the Historian, John Enschede, and Fleischman, the celebrated punch-cutter. There is a long preface recounting the origin of the foundry, and we meet in the specimen an evident bid for foreign orders, the names of the founts being placed above each specimen in Dutch, German, French, and English.

The same catalogue was reprinted in 1773, with change of date only. As the foundry at this time was in the zenith of its fame, a short account of its rise and progress may be acceptable.

The death of Hendrik Wetstein, whose family for three generations had been typefounders at Basle, led to the sale of the whole plant, which was purchased by John Enschede in 1743 and brought to Haarlem. At the same time the services of one of the best punch-cutters Europe has ever seen, John Michael Fleischman, were secured, and the new type-foundry at once started on a profitable and useful career. In 1780 the foundry of Dirk Voskens (which included that of J. Bleau, the celebrated printer and co-worker of Tycho Brahe, was purchased. Shortly after the foundries of Hendrik de Bruyn, of Van der Putte, of Van der Welde, and of Uitwerf were absorbed, together with the most celebrated of the minor foundries, that of Ploos van Amstel, which included the foundries of Athias, Elzevier, and Jan Roman. John Enschede, the founder of the house, was a successful man of business; he was also a bibliophile in the highest sense of the word. His great aim was to collect a library which should throw light upon the invention and early history of printing. It is to be regretted that he never carried out his intention of writing such a history, as from the collections he had made, and from his own personal knowledge, we should probably have had such a history of type-founders as would have solved many difficult questions in the history of the early Press.

Specimen Characterum in Neo-erecta Typorum Fusura Posonii apud Joannem Michaelem Lauderer Typographum existentium.
8vo. Posen, 1770.

Whoever the punch-cutter was for these founts, they do him no credit either for design or workmanship. Posen, or Presburg, is the capital town of Lower Hungary. Printing was not brought there till 1612, and even in 1646 there were but three printing-offices in the whole of Hungary.

Manuale Tipografico; del Cavaliere Giambattista Bodoni.
4to. Parma, 1788. Another edition, 1818.

This is a wonderful specimen-book, whether as regards the number of "faces," or the care and beauty displayed in their execution. Of what are called "Fancy" types there is not a single letter; nor, as might be expected from an Italian foundry, are there any "Blacks." The strength

lies in the Roman and Italics, of which there are 144 founts, to which must be added 110 varieties of "Titling" letters, or Roman caps only. There are 34 founts of Greek, 8 of Hebrew, 41 Eastern, such as Chaldaic, Arabic, &c. &c., 22 Russian, 3 music, of which two are arranged for double printing, *i.e.*, the stave first and then the notes, and, *mirabile dictu*, no less than 1,036 varieties of flowers for borders, &c. The Romans are all displayed by the use of our old friend "Quousque tandem," which gives them a familiar look. The best of the above founts were afterwards used for the following work, which, having been printed purposely to exhibit the capabilities of the Parmese foundry, may well be included in our list:—

L'Oraison Dominicale en 155 Langues Orientales et Latines.
Folio, Parma. 1806.

Bodoni was very proud of this volume, which gives the Lord's Prayer in 155 different languages and founts. "When once," he says, "the connoisseur understands that all these founts have been cut and cast and printed by one man, he will certainly be astonished; and if anything can be a recompense for the anxiety and loss of health such work has entailed upon me, it is to believe that this volume will some day be considered as one of the treasures and most valued ornaments of the chief European libraries." Truly that is the feeling that spurs a man on to do his best.

Essai de Caractères Russes gravés et fondus par Jean Baptiste Bodoni. Folio. Parma, 1782.

Twenty-two founts of Russian characters of various sizes, including Titling letter, all of which were cut and cast by the celebrated Bodoni. Printed as a special offering to the Emperor of Russia.

Proeve van Letteren welke gevonden werden ter Boek drukkerye van Herdigh en du Mortier, te Leyden. 8vo. 1793.

From the title page, "A Specimen of the Types to be found in the Printing-office of Herdigh and Du Mortier at Leyden," one would not be disposed to reckon this as a type-founder's book; but an examination of the contents

shows that the firm, as was often the case in Holland, were Printers as well as Founders. The specimens embrace every variety of type then known, and are very good. The numerous founts of Roman and Italic are numbered, and have their names over them in four languages, of which English is one—evidently a bid for English customers. The “Address” at the beginning commences with “See here! cultivators of the Noble Art of Printing—see for yourselves the state in which our ‘Printery’ now is.” The whole plant was in after years united to the Haarlem foundry.

*Proeve van eenige nieuwe Schriften, van eene nieuwe Snede; welke * * * gegooten worden op de Letter-gieterij onder de Firma Gebroeders Ploos van Amstel te Amsterdam. 8ro. 1796.*

“Specimens of New Types with a new face, which have been cast at the Letter-foundry of the brothers Ploos van Amstel.” In the early part of the eighteenth century, Isaac van der Putte, a type-founder, lived “over de Nieuwe Kerk” at Amsterdam. His son succeeded him, upon whose death, in 1767, the business was sold to the brothers Ploos-van-Amstel, who issued a fine specimen of the foundry in 1784, which is referred to in the preface of the 1796 edition. These founts are clean and shapely, but too numerous to be catalogued here. Like so many others, this foundry gravitated to Haarlem, and was finally absorbed by the Enschede firm.

*Specimen des nouveaux Caractères de la Foundrie * * * de P. Didot l'Ainé. 4to. Paris, 1819.*

These types are all cast to the new system of “bodies,” invented by M. Didot, and are regulated by typographical points, the French “line” being divided into six points. Twelve typographical points are very nearly equal to one pica.

Feuille d'Epreuve de la Fonderie de Firmin Didot. Paris, 1820.

A sheet of Demy, showing the new series of fat-faced Roman and Italic, and a beautiful series of Scripts.

In the foregoing remarks I have fixed upon the year 1820 as a boundary line between the old and new style of

punch-cutting. About that time great changes were initiated in the faces of types of all kinds. The thick strokes were made much thicker and the fine strokes much finer, the old ligatures were abolished and a mechanical primness given to the page, which, artistically, could scarcely be called improvement. At the same time printers began to crowd their racks with fancy founts of all degrees of grotesqueness, many painfully bad to the eye and unprofitable alike to founder and printer. The eye, like the palate, may become accustomed to bad food, and even like it; certain it is that many modern founts, which offend every rule of proportion and elegance, have had a good sale among printers.

In closing these remarks, I can only repeat how pleased I shall be with any communications upon the subject of Old Specimen Books.

WILLIAM BLADES

11, ABCHURCH LANE, LONDON.



P.S.—Since the remarks upon the Caslon specimen books were written, the following interesting addition has been made to my collection.

A Specimen of Printing Types, by William Caslon, Letter Founder to the King. 8vo. London, 1798.

A Specimen of Cast Ornaments, by Wm. Caslon, Letter Founder to the King. 8vo. London, 1798.

The above are bound together. The size is Demy 8vo. They were printed by C. Whittingham. The title-page of the first has in this copy been ruthlessly torn away and supplied in manuscript.

This foundry has already been described (page 11) as an offshoot from Chiswell-street, and the foundation of the great Sheffield foundry of Stephenson, Blake, & Co. The Roman and Italic founts are in the usual variety, but of varying excellence, and not equal on the whole to the parent house. The following is the preface, dated Salisbury-square, 1798. "Sir, having completed my New Specimen, I take this opportunity of sending you a copy, and flatter myself it will meet with your approbation. I shall be happy to receive your future orders, and you may be assured of every possible attention being paid to the execution of those you may favour me with. I remain, Sir, your obedient, humble servant, Wm. Caslon." The foundry originally in Finsbury-square, where in later years the celebrated bookseller, Lackington, had his shop, was removed, shortly before the issue of this specimen, to Salisbury-square. The Cast Ornaments in the second portion of the book are very good.

The following notes on the specimens in the library of the Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass., have been kindly communicated by Mr. Barton, Assistant Librarian to that institution.

A Specimen of Printing Types by William Caslon & Son, Letter Founders in London. Printed by Dryden Leach, MDCCCLXIII.

This is a year earlier than that hitherto considered as the first *book* of specimens issued in England. (See page 7).

A Specimen of Printing Types made by Joseph Fry & Sons, Letter Founders and Marking Instrument Makers. By the King's Royal Letters Patent. London, 1790.

This is five years earlier than the issue noticed already at page 10.

A Specimen of Printing Types, by John Baine & Grandson in Co., Letter Founders. Edinburgh, 1787.

This proves that Baine must have gone to Philadelphia at a period later than is supposed, and that he must have died soon after his arrival, as the date of his decease was 1790.

Specimen of Printing Type from the Letter Foundry of James Ronaldson, Cedar, between Ninth and Tenth Streets. Philadelphia, 1816.

In the dedication to the printers of the United States, a specimen book of 1812 is mentioned. Archibald Binney is said to have left the establishment in August, 1815.

A Specimen of Printing Types from the Foundry of E. White, New York. J. Seymour, Printer, No. 49, John-street, New York, 1817.


A Specimen of Printing Types cast at the Foundry of D. & G. Bruce, in Chamber's New Chatham-street, New York, 1818.

These titles are given in full, having important variations from the short titles already quoted from the catalogue of the Worcester Antiquarian Society.

W. B.



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