

The down is easily collected, as the birds are very tame. The female having laid five or six eggs of a pale olive green in a nest thickly lined with her own down, the collector removes the bird, robs the nest, and replaces her. She then lays three or four eggs more, and relines the nest, when again it is rifled, obliging her to line it for the third time. Then she calls upon her mate, who willingly plucks the soft feathers from his breast to supply the deficiency.

Skalholt, the ancient capital, is replete with historical interest. In the eleventh century the first school was there established, and there also was the seat of the first bishop. The cathedral was celebrated for its size, and in 1100, Latin, poetry, music, and rhetoric were taught in the school, more than they were in the large European cities. But nothing remains of its past glories but the name. The school and bishopric are removed; the cathedral has disappeared; three cottages contain all the inhabitants left of the extensive city, and the large graveyard is the only memorial of its former importance.

Reykjavik, the present capital, consists of a collection of wooden houses, one story in height, built along the lava track, with a few turf huts flanking it at either end. There is a public library containing twelve thousand volumes kept in a room in the cathedral, and books are lent freely for months, or even for a year, to inhabitants of remote districts.

There is also a New Icelandic Literary Society, whose object is to publish useful works in the language of the country. It receives an annual grant of one hundred and twenty dollars from the Danish government, which is its only resource, except the annual contributions of its members, yet it has published many excellent books, despite its narrow means.

There are three newspapers published in Iceland—two published at Reykjavik, and one at Akreyri, on the Polar Ocean. Perhaps in no country in Europe is elementary education more generally diffused than in Iceland. Every mother teaches her children to read and write, and every peasant, after his day's toil, loses no opportunity of inculcating in the hearts of his little ones a sound morality, in which he is ably aided by the pastors. Indeed, a visit to an Icelander's hut on a winter's evening would furnish an example to the people of more favored lands. No idler would be found; women and girls knit or spin, men and boys mend household utensils, or cut ornaments or snuff-boxes from ivory or wood with remarkable skill, while one of the family reads aloud, or relates from memory, poems or chronicles of the deeds of ancient heroes. This general education is one of the first things which strikes the stranger with astonishment, for in traveling to the Geysers his guide will probably accost him in Latin, or, stopping at a farm-house, his host will address him in the same language.

The clergy, while generally men of learning, virtue, and even genius, are usually miserably poor, the average income being only fifty dollars a year. They are, of course, obliged to perform the hardest work of day laborers to keep their families from starving. Their huts are scarcely better than those of the meanest

fishermen, and their dress corresponds more with their squalid poverty than with the dignity of their office.

We will finish our sketch of this far-off island of the sea, by a short account of Jon Shorlakson, a poor priest who, with a fixed income of only thirty dollars a year, and therefore condemned to all sorts of drudgery, made a translation of Pope's Essay on Man, and afterward, when nearly seventy, of Milton's Paradise Lost. A literary society in London, hearing of this, sent him a present of one hundred and fifty dollars, a small sum to them, but a mine of wealth in the estimation of the poor Islandic pastor. He wrote a letter in elegant Latin, expressing his thanks, and accompanied it with a manuscript copy of his translation. Unfortunately, this was not printed till some years after his death, which occurred in 1821.

Robin Red-breast and the Cherries.

BY GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

WHAT makes thy radiant bosom red,
Sweet robin red-breast, tell me true?
In some quaint legend it is said,
A sharp thorn pierced thy bosom through,
And then it bled,
And stained thy plumes of crimson hue.

IS it the red-ripe cherries' stain
I see upon thy red-breast sweet,
Not washed out through the summer rain,
Its cleansing showers on thee repeat?
The answering strain
Came from a bill yellow as wheat.

SOMETIMES 'tis love that lights the flame,
That burns upon my glowing breast.
Sometimes it is the blush of shame
For those who rob my sacred nest,
And those who aim
Their missiles at my peace and rest.

IAM a solo singer free.
The grass and buds and blossoms rare
Are notes that nature writes for me.
My mission is to banish care
With melody;
And cherries are my dainty fare."

OH, robin blithe, I like the notes
That come from thy green organ-loft;
Joy follows where thy music floats,
And hope is borne from croft to croft,
When happy throats
Join in the chorus sweet and soft.

HERE, where the ripest cherries grow,
Come peck and pluck the best, and eat
Long as they last, and fear no foe;
Thine is the song and mine the treat.
Thy breast aglow
Shall be the lamp to light thy feet.



1. SCHAFER. 2. FAUST. 3. GUTTENBERG.

Romance of the Art Preservative.

BY H. F. R.

IT is a somewhat remarkable fact, and one not generally noted, that the art by means of which the record of all the discoveries and achievements of every other science is preserved, has utterly failed to indicate with any degree of certainty the name of its own inventor. Books, pamphlets, treatises, and discussions without number, all devoted to this question, have succeeded in casting but very little light on the subject; and at this late day, in deciding as to whom belongs the palm of honor, we are met by a mass of conflicting and contradictory testimony that is enough to bewilder one. In fact, it is only with a not inconsiderable reservation that we can say that a certain personage was the actual first inventor.

To begin with, the fact stares us in the face that many hundred years before the Christian era block printing was successfully practiced by the Chinese. Marco Polo, the great Venetian traveler, who flourished 1252-1324, whose travels took him into the heart of the Chinese empire, and some say even to Japan, brought back glowing accounts of the manners, customs, and arts of those then almost unknown people, and among these accounts may have been a description, or even specimens of block printing. But be that as it may, it seems pretty clear that by the commencement of the fifteenth century any knowledge, if it ever existed, of the art, had been buried in the dust of those Dark Ages out of which Europe was just emerging.

There are four or five cities in Europe which claim that printing was first practiced within their walls, and each of these claims is put forward in behalf of a different personage. But the result of the best and most painstaking research confines these conflicting assumptions to the city of Harlem, and to a resident of that city named LAURENZES JOHN KOSTER, and proves that the invention must have occurred about the year 1429, or, as some writers stipulate, not earlier than 1422 nor later than 1436.

The other places which have established a just but later claim are Mentz and Strasburg in Germany, but though the art was undoubtedly practiced at these towns at a very early

date, it was imported from Haarlem by men who had there first obtained a knowledge of it.

Adrian Junius, a learned man who lived and wrote in the sixteenth century, gives an account that, inasmuch as it represents largely the contemporary opinion as to the origin of the invention in question, has been received with general credence.

From this narrative we learn that John Koster inhabited a decent and somewhat aristocratic house in the city of Haarlem, situated on the market place, opposite the royal palace. His name was assumed, and was inherited from his ancestors, who had long enjoyed the honorable and lucrative office of coster or sexton to the church. As he was walking in the wood contiguous to the city, which was the general custom and mode of recreation of the richer citizens in the afternoon and upon holidays, he formed the habit of cutting letters with his knife upon the bark of the beech; with these letters he formed marks upon paper in a contrary direction in the manner of a seal, until at length he formed a few lines for the amusement of himself, and for the use of the children of his brother-in-law. This succeeding so well, he attempted greater things, and, being a man of genius and reflection, he invented a thicker and more tenacious ink than the one in use for ordinary writing, seeing that the latter was too thin for his purpose, and made blotted marks. With this ink he was able to print from blocks upon which he had cut figures and letters.

As may be easily imagined, the new art, while as yet only a mere pastime, soon attracted much attention, and Koster soon essayed a larger work than he had yet attempted—namely, a book. This, a volume of rude images and letters, entitled *Speculum Humana Salvationis*, he carried through successfully about the year 1430. The leaves, as was common to all early books, were printed on one side only; then two were pasted together, in order that the blank side might not offend the taste of the reader. Koster soon found that there was a great source of wealth in his discovery. The rich flocked to his house to purchase copies of the first printed books, so that he was unable to meet the demand, and in proportion as the profits increased so did his love for the art he had brought to the light, and which already promised to work a revolution in the affairs of mankind.

He hired men to help him, to whom he taught the mysteries of the new craft, among whom was John Gensfleisch and his younger brother, called, for distinction's sake, Gutenberg. After continuing for some years to cut the letters and designs for his books on blocks, Koster at length conceived the idea of separate types. These, also, he invented, but they were always of wood, and were, as may be easily imagined, exceedingly clumsy.

For many years, until his death, Koster continued the business of printing, and after that event it was carried on by members of his family in Haarlem.

In one respect his employment of assistants was unfortunate, but for the world at large it was a most unmitigated blessing, for to that fact we owe the first dissemination of the craft, and its transplanting to other cities.

The man above alluded to, John Gensfleisch, after he had learned the mysteries of the art in all its branches, thought himself sufficiently instructed, and watched for an opportunity to turn his knowledge to his own account, notwithstanding the fact that he was bound by an oath not to break faith with his employer. As he could not find a better chance, he packed up a goodly portion of the types and other articles on Christmas eve while the family were away celebrating the festival, and stole away with them. He first fled to Amsterdam, thence to Cologne, until he could establish himself at Mentz, a more secure place, where he might open shop and reap the fruits of his knavery. It is a known fact that within twelve months he published the *Alexandri Galli Doctrinale*, a grammar at that time in high repute, with the same materials which Koster had used.

After Gensfleisch settled at Mentz he was largely assisted with money, etc., by John Fust, or Faust, a rich and highly respectable man, who, as a natural consequence, shared the profits with him. Subsequently, other persons were admitted to the partnership.

Some writers have given credence to the story that John Gensfleisch had married a daughter of Koster, and that she was a party to his despoliation of her father. There is, unfortunately, no means of ascertaining the truth or falsity of this; the latter part of it, certainly sounds rather improbable.

Gutenberg, the younger brother of Gensfleisch, continued at Strasburg for many years in various employments, and in many endeavors to successfully engage in printing books. He and some others did produce some small ones, but becoming involved in numerous lawsuits he quitted Strasburg in disgust and joined his brother at Mentz. All traces of his publications at Strasburg have long since vanished.

The new art soon spread over Europe. A press was established at Bologna as early as 1462; one at Paris in 1464; another at Rome in 1466; and far-away Iceland had its printing office in 1530, at which a Bible was printed in 1584. It soon crossed the channel, and in 1474 William Caxton, whose centenary was celebrated a short time since, having acquired a knowledge of the art in Germany, carried it into practice at Westminster, at the sign of the Red Pale. Though at the time over sixty years old, he was remarkable for his industry and perseverance, and, besides laboring as a translator and author, he introduced many improvements in the art. The productions of his press amounted to no less than sixty-four. To the west of the Sanctuary in Westminster Abbey stood the Almony, where the first printing press in England had been erected in 1471, under the patronage of the learned Thomas Milling, the then abbot. The first book produced here, according to some, was *The Game and Playe of Chesse*, but the *Dictes and Notable Wise Sayings of the Philosophers*, published in 1477, is the first book which can with certainty be maintained to have been printed in England; and although there is some dispute about the exact spot, there is no doubt that the press was first set up within the precincts of this religious house. Caxton

died in 1491, and the following entry in the churchwarden's books of St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, is still on record: "Item, atte bureyng of William Caxton, for iiij. torches vjs. vijd. Item, for the belle atte same bureyng, vjd."

The order of Jesuits were the first to introduce printing into the New World, which occurred at Mexico in 1536. The first book printed was the *Escala espiritual de San Juan Climaco*, of which no copy is now extant; the oldest American book now in existence is the *Manual de Adultos*, 1540, of which, however, only the last four leaves are to be seen in the library of the cathedral of Toledo, Spain.

The first press in North America was set up at Cambridge, Mass., in 1638, under the charge of Stephen Dayl. The infant colony was indebted for this to the Rev. Jesse Glover, an English nonconformist minister, possessed of ample means, who had taken up his residence among his friends in New England. The first work issued was the *Bay Psalm-Book*, bearing date of 1640.

To recount how, for the last four centuries the power of the magic types has increased with gigantic strides is unnecessary. While undoubtedly there have been abuses of this power, on the whole the motto of the *Salem Register* fitly portrays the attitude which the printing press has ever assumed:

"Here shall the Press the People's right maintain,
Unawed by influence, and unbribed by gain;
Here patriot Truth her glorious precepts draw,
Pledged to Religion, Liberty and Law."

In conclusion, let me append the exact words of a placard issued by William Caxton, the founder of English printing, a fac-simile of which was exhibited at the centenary above referred to; premising that the "pies" referred to were the service-books used at Salisbury, so called because of the different colors in which the text and rubric were printed:

"A PLACARD.—If it plesse any man spirituel or temperel to bye any pies of two or three comemoraciōs of Salisburi use eprynted after the forme of this presēt lettre whiche ben wel and trully correct, late him come to westmonester in to thealmonesty at the reed pale [red pale] and he shall have them good there."



ENGRAVING OF AN ANCIENT PLAYING CARD