

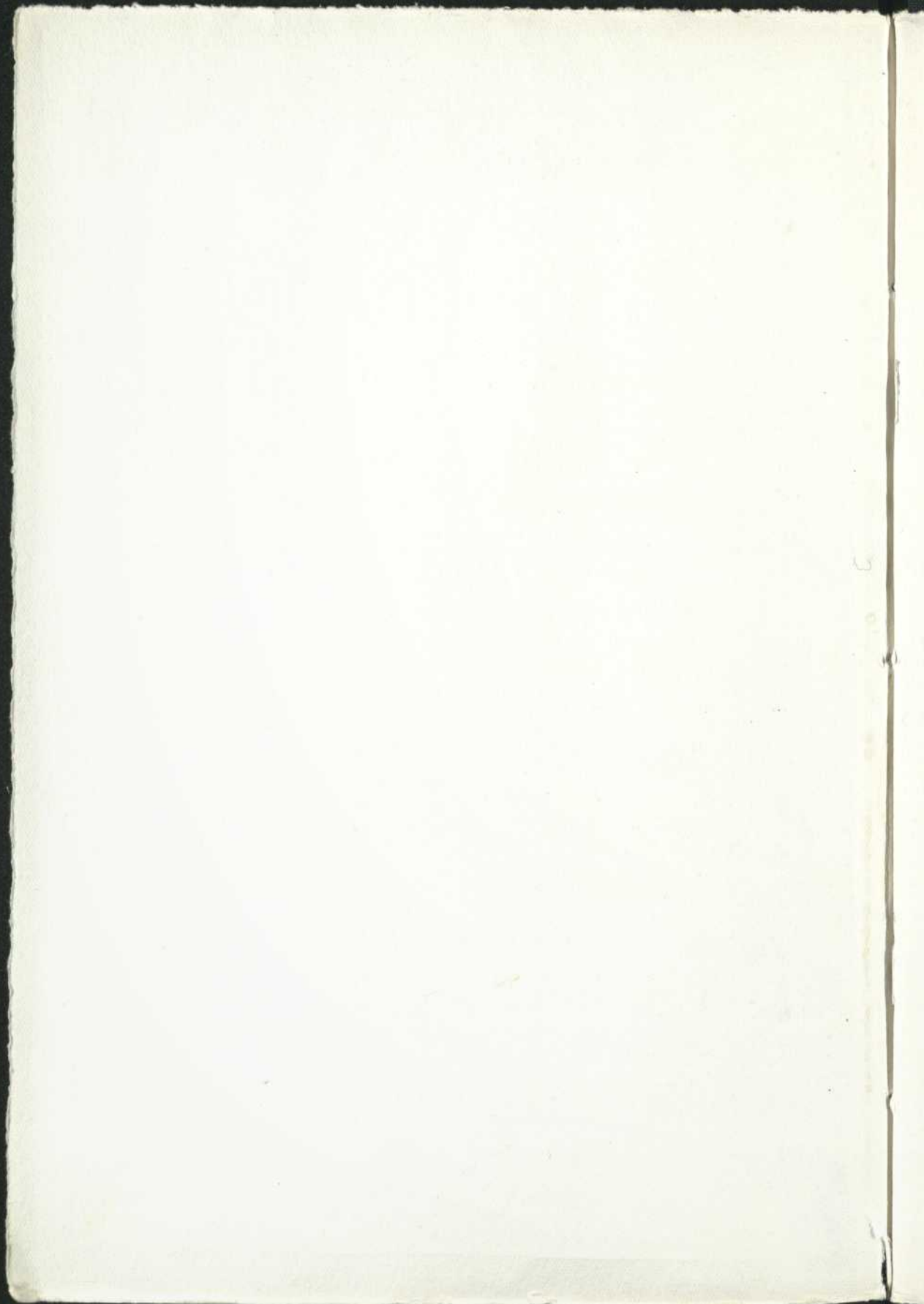
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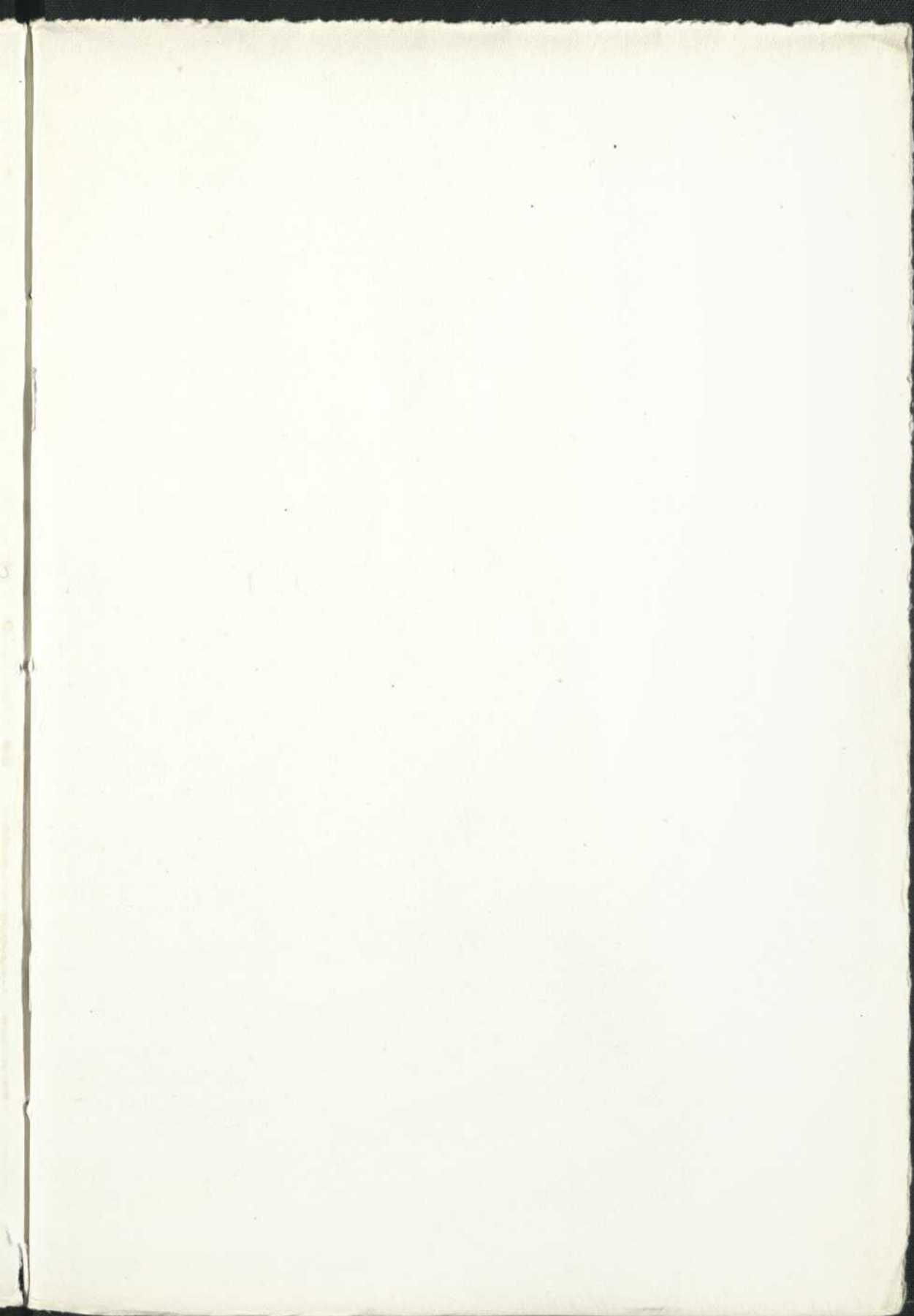
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A Brief History by  
ÆGIDIUS FAUTEUX, F.R.S.C.

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CHAPTER ONE  
*which deals with the first  
Printers on the Continent  
of North America*





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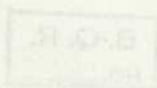
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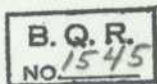


"But works are things, and a small drop of ink,  
Falling like dew upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think."

*(Byron: Don Juan, Canto III).*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### *The First Printers on the Continent of North America*



PRINTING, that process which enables us to reproduce thought-symbols in unlimited quantities and gives us at the same time the power of making these symbols immortal, is beyond doubt one of the most beneficial and most marvellous inventions of modern times. It comes to us as the third and final stage in mankind's long struggle to achieve the more perfect and wide-spread expressions of thought, having superimposed itself upon hand-writing in the same manner as hand-writing, many centuries before, had superimposed itself upon speech.

Some people will go so far as to claim that the discovery of this method of reproducing thought-symbols was fraught with more momentous results than any other discovery, even that of the New World. As inhabitants of the New World, it is not an easy thing for us to accept such a claim at its face value, for our viewpoint is necessarily a prejudiced one.

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But if it were possible for us to assume a strictly unbiased viewpoint, we might possibly admit some truth in such a claim. Our difficulty is that we cannot refrain from asking ourselves what our position would be if America still awaited its discoverer; and this question, ever present in the back of our minds, effectively prevents us from admitting that Johann Gutenberg may have made a greater contribution to civilization than that of Christopher Columbus. Nevertheless, as sharers in the legacy which Johann Gutenberg bequeathed to the world at large, we do not claim that this contribution is of smaller value. For here, as elsewhere, the printed word has become an integral factor in our civilization. It influences every single phase of our lives, and because it is in America that Printing perhaps exerts its most powerful sway, we cannot conceive of a time when it did not exist.

From coast to coast of this huge continent stretch myriads of giant presses. Day and night alike, the air vibrates to their subdued rumbling, as they pour forth their ever-growing flood of printed matter to calm or arouse the minds and emotions of the one hundred and twenty millions of people living in America. This is reason enough for our being more interested perhaps than any other nation in studying this stupendous social agency which, still hardly a step away from its swaddling clothes, is already well-nigh irresistible and never ceases in its work of moulding the opin-

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ions and habits of our race. What was responsible for the introduction into America of this shaper of men's souls and hearts? Where was it first unleashed? Who were the artisans to first set it in motion? These are the questions which we propose to ourselves and which the following pages briefly and, we hope, clearly answer.

If it is indeed true that the utility of history consists in the fact that it casts the clarifying light of the past upon the future, nothing can be more useful to us in estimating the almost infinite possibilities which Printing, that preponderant factor in modern life, still offers, than this rapid survey of its beginnings in America; for by such a survey we shall have brought home to us the striking contrast existing between the gigantic conflagration with which Printing illumines the present day, and the flickering spark which was its almost miraculous origin less than three centuries ago.

Around the year 1436, when Johann Gutenberg was making his first groping efforts to lay the foundations of the typographic art which later was to revolutionize the world, the hardy Basque fishermen were the only people who dared from time to time to brave the sea that lay between Europe and unknown America; and even if they had known of the wonderful invention of this citizen of Mayence, they would never have dreamed of taking a printing press with them in their fragile craft; Christopher

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Columbus himself, who came almost half a century later, had sufficient worries of another kind to occupy him. When all is said and done, Printing is only a product or corollary of European civilization; and of necessity it was forced to wait until its parent civilization was firmly rooted in the soil of the New World, before it could launch forth from the sheltered environments of the Old World and venture to cross the Atlantic. Printing was indeed on the point of celebrating the first centenary of a vigorous existence in the Old World, about the middle of the sixteenth century, before it was afforded its somewhat belated opportunity of taking this step. Mexico City, the ancient stronghold of the Aztecs, had the honour of producing the first printed matter in the New World, and the glory of making this noteworthy contribution to civilization fell to Spain, that same Spain which some persist to-day in regarding as a backward nation, and which, notwithstanding, led all nations for long centuries in enterprise and achievement.

The actual date when the first printed matter was produced in Mexico was unknown for a long time, and even after many years of painstaking research, scholars have been able to determine upon an approximate date only. Isaiah Thomas, whose *History of Printing in America* was published at Worcester in 1810, had heard a rumour that a book had been published in the capital of New Spain as early as 1604, but he was never able to learn its title.

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If he could revisit the earth to-day, how astonished he would be to learn that the *History of New Spain* by Arigo Martinez, which he placed first in point of time in his list of books printed in Mexico, was in reality the one hundred and tenth and perhaps the one hundred and fifteenth! In 1837, Ternaux, in his *Bibliothèque Américaine*, advanced Thomas' date about thirty-five years and gave the honour of being first to the *Vocabulario of Molina*, published in 1571; but even this advance fell far short of the truth. In reality, the first book, as far as we now are able to tell, was printed in Mexico in 1540. Unfortunately, nothing remains to-day of this venerable fore-runner of the American book but the last two leaves, and it is a near miracle that these should have outlived the vicissitudes of the centuries. Henry HARRISSE, in his *Bibliotheca Americana Vetusissima*, brings this home to us very vividly. These few leaves were discovered in the Provincial Library at Toledo, Spain, bound in the same volume with another work. Almost immediately after their discovery, they disappeared mysteriously, to be re-discovered in a bookseller's shop in London, about 1870, by the Spanish collector, Pasqual de Gayangos. This work, which is to-day known under the name of *Manual de Adultos*, was written by Christopher Cabrera of Burgos, who was at the time of writing Notary Apostolic to Mexico. It is written in verse and printed in gothic characters, and evidences go to show that it

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originally consisted of thirty-eight leaves, which would make it seventy-six pages in the little folio format characteristic of Spanish printeries of that time. There is not even any certainty that the *Manual of Cabrera* will not one day be deposed from its position of honour, as has been the fate of so many other works before it. Some scholars contend that there was another work published in Mexico as early as 1536. This is said to have been the *Escala Spiritual*, a religious treatise by Saint John Climacus, translated from the original Greek into Spanish by Fray Juan de Estrada. No copy of it is known to exist, and no one can boast of having ever seen it, but it had been mentioned in 1625 by Augustin Davila Padilla with sufficiently specific indications to allow us to presume that it was in fact produced in Mexico.

But if some fortunate bibliophile ever succeeds in finding a copy of the *Escala Spiritual* of 1536, he will very probably have pushed back the date of the production of printed matter in Mexico to its extreme limit. For it appears certain that the first press was brought to Mexico by Mendoza, the first vice-roy of New Spain, about fifteen years after the downfall of Montezuma at the hands of Ferdinand Cortez. Mendoza, not having arrived in Mexico until the middle of 1535, it hardly seems possible to deprive the *Escala*, published in 1536, of its title of priority. Even though some primers or spelling books or detached pages

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had been printed before it, we are none the less right in speaking of the *Escala* as the first book printed in the New World. Also, no one can definitely say who was the printer of this first book, but if a complete copy of it is ever found, we would discover most likely that it carries the imprint borne by the *Manual de Adultos*, published in 1540; that of Juan Cromberger. This Cromberger was a printer of Seville in Spain, and it is known that he never left Europe. He simply established a branch of his Sevillian printing-house in Mexico and confided its direction to Juan Pablos, originally of Brescia, who would have printed the *Escala* and the *Manual of Cabrera*. It is, therefore, Juan Pablos, and not Juan Cromberger, whom the printers of America should hail as their most remote kinsman in America.

As regards later printing in Mexico, it is sufficient to say that approximately one hundred works were printed there between 1536 and the end of the sixteenth century. The following centuries witnessed fluctuations in the volume of printed matter produced in Mexico, but from 1536 on until the present, the production of printed matter has never ceased in that land. With this briefest of summaries, we may now very well pass on to regions nearer home.

Exactly one century intervenes between the introduction of printing into Mexico and into English America. This fact does not necessar-

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ily mean that the English-speaking peoples were slower than the Spanish in taking advantage of this supremely useful method of communication willed to humanity at large by Johann Gutenberg. For it was scarcely thirty years after the establishment of Jamestown, and less than twenty years after the Puritans landed from the Mayflower on the coast of Massachusetts, that an obscure printer set in motion on American soil the crude press which he had brought with him from England. His simple action had repercussions almost unparalleled in history.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, has the honour of having sheltered the first printing-shop in North America, just as it afterwards had the honour of establishing the first university in all that part of the continent extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic. Until 1879, no one ever dreamed of contesting its right to being termed the cradle of typographic art in America. But in that year, someone raised a claim on behalf of Maryland, and for a time citizens of the two states took part in a dispute every bit as acrimonious as that waged by the seven cities of old in connection with the birth-place of Homer. Happily, the apprehension felt by the citizens of Massachusetts was of short duration.

It was Thomas Scharf, a Catholic writer, who first launched this canard, most naively and most straightforwardly, in a *History of Maryland*. He said there was evidence that a

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Jesuit, Andrew White, who had arrived in Maryland in 1663 in the entourage of Lord Baltimore, had soon afterwards published there a catechism designed for the instruction of the Indians of that region. For a long time, this catechism could not be found, and then suddenly another Jesuit, Father P. McSherry, appeared and claimed to have discovered a copy in the Archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome. Thomas Scharf had explained the subsequent silence of the press in Maryland by stating that the original press had been confiscated along with other possessions of the Jesuits in the persecutions of a later day. This reputed discovery rejoiced the hearts of Maryland's citizens and brought a corresponding depression to the inhabitants of Massachusetts. It was reserved for another Jesuit to put an end to the controversy. Father Dewitt, of Georgetown University, realizing that his Order was rich enough in glory and had no need to hide facts which did not redound to its credit, did not hesitate to declare that Scharf's claim was entirely without foundation; that in this case, as in so many others, the wish had simply been father to the thought. It was true that Father McSherry had discovered in the archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome a catechism written by a Father Andrew White, but, he added, some one had forgotten one thing in announcing the discovery, and that was, that the catechism was in manuscript and not printed. This revelation restored to Cam-

THE  
WHOLE  
BOOKE OF PSALMES  
*Faithfully*  
TRANSLATED into ENGLISH  
*Metre.*

Whereunto is prefixed a discourse de-  
claring not only the lawfullnes, but also  
the necessity of the heavenly Ordinance  
of singing Scripture Psalmes in  
the Churches of  
God.

*Col. 111.*

*Let the word of God dwell plenteously in  
you, in all wisdom, teaching and exhort-  
ing one another in Psalmes, Hymnes, and  
spirituall Songs, singing to the Lord with  
grace in your hearts.*

*James v.*

*If any be afflicted, let him pray, and if  
any be merry let him sing psalmes.*

*Imprinted*

1640

The first edition of the *Bay Psalm Book* printed by  
Stephen Daye at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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bridge its right to be called the cradle of typographic art in English America.

Although it does not appear on any of the publications issued from his press, the name of the first printer to open a printing establishment in North America has been saved for us. He was Stephen Daye. Daye came to America with the Rev. Jesse Glover, a non-conformist clergyman, who hoped to find on the shores of Massachusetts the religious freedom denied him in England, and who, desiring to feed the souls of his flock with pious publications, engaged Daye in England and furnished him with the necessary equipment. The death of Glover on the voyage prevented Daye from following out this project, and 1639 found him opening his own modest printing shop in Cambridge. He was far from being a master of his art, and his few works reflect but poor credit upon his ability. There is no reason for astonishment, therefore, to learn that the leading spirits in Cambridge were engaged some years later in seeking a more qualified printer to replace him. Beginning in 1649, Daye passed from the position of master printer, operating his own establishment, to that of simple craftsman in the employ of Samuel Green, his successor. Neither this fact, nor the faulty nature of his work, take away from Daye the credit of being the pioneer printer in our part of the world, and he will ever be remembered with honour on this account.

Stephen Daye produced very little during his

short career as master printer. There were many reasons for this. Authors were few and far between, and those of his fellow townsmen, who felt the need of expressing themselves in print, preferred to patronize the far distant but more skilful typographers of London. Some proclamations, an occasional religious tract, weighty in form but light in content, and little annual almanacs; beyond these there was little in Cambridge to feed a press at that time, and Daye had nothing else to keep his press moving. In 1639 he printed a few small items which have since been lost, but in 1640 he turned out the first book, worthy at all of the name, to appear from his printery.

This first-born of American books, printed in English, is to-day universally known as the *Bay Psalm Book*. Despite its poor appearance and miserable typography, it is a treasure par excellence for the libraries of private collectors. Seventeen hundred copies were distributed by sale or otherwise by the publishers, but not long after their appearance these nearly all had disappeared, literally frayed away by the calloused fingers of the austere Puritans and the feverish ones of their fervent spouses. Ten copies are known to be in existence to-day. One of these is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and the others with two exceptions are permanently located in public collections on this side of the Atlantic. Eight copies, therefore, will never pass again under the hammer of the auctioneer, a fact which drives the army

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of private collectors of Americana almost to despair; for, one and all, their highest ambition is to lay their hands some day upon this *rara avis* of the book-loving world, and day by day the possibility of ever realizing their dream becomes less and less. The time is past when the happy adventure which befell Henry Stevens about 1857, can happen again to a bibliophile.

Stevens himself tells the story with delightful humour in his *Recollections of Mr. James Lenox*. For ten years he and the great London book-seller, Wm. Pickering, had searched the entire world for a copy of the *Bay Psalm Book*, which Mr. Lenox desired to add to his collection, and the absence of which, from his shelves, is said to have kept the eminent New York collector from sleeping. The combined efforts of these two experienced sleuths of the world of books were in vain until the day in 1857 when Stephens, attending a sale of books at Sotheby's, amused himself, while awaiting the arrival of the auctioneer, in idly opening a packet of books. There, in the middle of a number of insignificant brochures, lay the precious psalter, the objective of his long hunt! And, O irony of fate! he found it among the books of William Pickering, recently deceased, that same book-seller who had been his partner in the decade-long search. Stevens remade the packet again, and prudently withdrew a short distance, without, however, losing sight of it. Composing his face to the required gravity, with that consummate comic art of which he

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was a past master, he set himself to await the fateful moment. It arrived, and the packet of books in question was offered as a lot, without any particular description. With the greatest sang-froid in the world and without allowing his voice to betray the least emotion, Stevens opened the bidding by offering six-pence for them. One lone amateur collector, a Mr. Lily, whose long experience no doubt had taught him to be suspicious of even the most harmless seeming action of the celebrated book-dealer, felt obliged to outbid him as a matter of conscience. But, after having vainly sought for some clue in the steady eyes of his rival, and after having in his own turn untied the packet of books offered for sale, he was re-assured that there was nothing to suspect and accordingly refrained from bidding higher. The lot was finally knocked down to Stevens for the ridiculously small sum of nineteen shillings.

Only then did the sly old blade allow his joy to show. Puzzled by the unusual eagerness which he had displayed in securing possession of his recent purchase, his fellow dealers asked him:

"Well, is there anything so precious about it, Mr. Stevens?"

"Oh, no," he answered, "it is really nothing—nothing more than a copy of the first book printed in America." And leaving his audience discomfited, he carefully tucked away the Psalter of Stephen Daye in the pocket of his frock-coat and took a triumphant departure.

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Some days later he resold the old book for which he had paid nineteen shillings to Mr. Lenox for eighty pounds.

Brinley's copy—the next to the last, we believe, to be offered at public sale—brought the sum of twelve hundred dollars, in 1879. At the present time, when the collecting of rare books has become a carnival of extravagance and when the sums brought by certain books have reached fantastic figures, what a homeric contest, with bank-notes as weapons, would be waged for the *Bay Psalm Book*, if by some improbable chance a copy of it should once more appear on the auction tables of one of our leading book-sellers!

In 1640, the Puritans could purchase the *Bay Psalm Book* for twenty pence, and the sale of the whole issue of seventeen hundred copies brought the publishers one hundred and forty-one pounds, thirteen shillings and four pence, a sum less than half that obtained by Mr. Brinley for his copy in 1879. *Habent sua fata libelli.*

For a long time after this date, Cambridge continued to be the lone printing centre in America. Activity in the matter of printing became greater as the population increased and as the community became better organized. Beginning in 1660, this activity became pronounced, for in that year the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel imported a new press from London, to be employed exclusively in the production of books in the Indian lan-

M A M U S S E  
WUNNEETUPANATAMWE  
UP-BIBLUM GOD  
NANEESWE  
NUKKONE TESTAMENT  
KAH WONK  
WUSKU TESTAMENT.

Ne quoshkinnamuk nashpe Wuttinneumoh *CHRIST*  
uoh alcowetig

JOHN ELIOT.

*C A M B R I D G E :*

Printcuoop nashpe *Samuel Green* kah *Marmaduke Johnson*.

1 6 . 6 3.

The first *Indian Bible*, printed by Samuel Green and  
Marmaduke Johnson.

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guage. On arrival, this press was lodged under the same roof with the press brought over in 1639, by the Rev. Jesse Glover, and both were placed under the direction of Samuel Green, Stephen Daye's successor. Green does not seem to have been very proficient at the time he accepted the post of official printer. The first publications issued under his name resemble those of Daye in their general crudity and faults, and Daye, as we already know, was in his employ. So, it is not surprising that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel thought it better to bring a printer of more experience from England in 1660, when a start was being made on the printing of the Indian tracts of John Eliot. Marmaduke Johnson was the name of the new printer. Altogether Samuel Green worked as a printer in Cambridge for more than forty years, and he died there in 1702 at the age of eighty-seven years. His long career gave him a thorough grounding in his art, and he seems to have bred in his descendants taste for and love of printing, for he was the founder of that long dynasty of Greens which for four generations was the pride of American printing.

Marmaduke Johnson, then, is the man chiefly responsible for the printing of those very rare tracts of John Eliot, particularly of the *Indian Primer* and the *Indian Bible*, the two most celebrated. While he was working on the latter book in 1662, he was haled before the courts on the serious charge of having, while

already married to a wife in the Old Country, trifled with the affections of Samuel Green's daughter without the father's consent. He was heavily fined and ordered to return to England; but nevertheless he remained in Cambridge, and in 1663 we find him at his case, setting up the pages of the *Indian Bible*. From a letter of that same year we also learn that it had been decided to re-engage Johnson and to give him a year's trial. This was done on the request of the Reverend John Eliot, who considered Johnson's help indispensable in the work which had been so unfortunately interrupted by his, Johnson's, fickle conduct. That the stern judges of that land of Blue Laws and the Scarlet Letter should go so far as to agree to a compromise, when the section of the moral code which they particularly had at heart was involved, shows that the forbearance of the worthy John Eliot must have been imparted to others to an unusual extent, and shows also that Marmaduke Johnson was, for his time, a workman of acknowledged superiority. But just as soon as his usefulness was ended, and this came about in 1664, the selfish guardians of the city dismissed him without much mercy.

From Cambridge, Printing slowly spread itself over the rest of New England and also into the provinces situated farther south on the Atlantic seaboard. The city of Boston was so close a neighbour that it could hardly escape receiving the first offspring of the mother-press at Cambridge, and the infant art was born

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there in 1674. Rather a feeble infant, its early life was attended with difficulties, and its first wails gave no hint of the vigorous and productive career which it was destined to have. Certainly it was only a few years before Boston definitely assumed first place in printing on this continent, and to-day it still remains one of the great world-centres of printing, and so is befittingly called the Athens of North America.

John Foster, who was the first of the long roll of Bostonian printers, did not have a particularly distinguished tenure of office. In his short career, he had neither the time nor the capacity to publish other than a few tracts and the inevitable almanacs, but despite his lack of skill as a printer, his death in 1681 created a void which was alarming to Boston. The people there had tasted printer's ink and the heady flavour had mounted to their brains. Printing had already proved such a stimulus to progress that people in Boston felt their ambitious community could not afford to be without it. There was no printer available, but the leading spirits of the city would not admit themselves defeated by such a trifling condition. What chiefly concerned them was the fact that their press must not remain inactive and that, whether poorly or well, it must keep on functioning. On the insistence of his fellow-citizens, Samuel Sewall, a respected judge, but never a printer, undertook as a matter of convenience to the public, to fill the position left vacant by the much regretted Foster. Every

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one has heard of that character in the comedy who, not knowing the difference between a sharp and a flat was invited one day, when in a salon, to play the piano. He sat himself on the stool saying: "I have never played, but I can try!" Samuel Sewall was something of that sort; he tried. Unfortunately, his ability was not as great in printing as in civic matters and he soon discovered that he could not fulfil the duties of his new position. He thereupon asked for and obtained relief from them. To the rescue of the Boston Press in its difficulties there then came, very happily, that old veteran of printing, Samuel Green, bringing with him one of his sons, fresh from his own school. Samuel Green junior, who was joined soon afterwards by his brother, Bartholomew, became the true founder of the printing art in Boston and with them printing in that city entered upon an era of progress in spite of the different troubles which from time to time confronted it. Thomas Fleet, Samuel Kneeland, James Franklin and his illustrious brother, Benjamin Franklin himself, had only to follow the path which they first blazed, in order to make the civil capital of Massachusetts the intellectual capital of America for the next hundred odd years.

The *Boston News Letter*, issued for the first time in April, 1704, was the pioneer newspaper on this continent. The credit of initiating it goes to John Campbell, the postmaster at that time, and Bartholomew Green had the honour of printing it.

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The *Boston News Letter* was a small sheet and would seem very insignificant to-day if placed side by side with the gargantuan newspapers of the present time. But as the force which set journalism in motion, it must perforce be credited with a more weighty influence upon the destiny of America than that exerted by its bulkier successors.

One lone newspaper, however, even if it happened to be the *Boston News Letter* itself, which possessed so much vitality that it was able to remain in existence for three-quarters of a century, could not long suffice to appease the intellectual appetite of Boston. In 1719, the *Boston Gazette* was launched upon its career, and two years later the *New England Courant* appeared. This latter journal had the distinction of being edited and printed for some time by Benjamin Franklin. Nothing better illustrates the bustling activity in the printing trade at Boston, than this almost simultaneous appearance of three newspapers at a period when only one other newspaper had appeared in all the rest of America.

Philadelphia, where this newspaper was published, occupied a place in printing at this time second only to that of Boston. The Quakers of Pennsylvania were not less enterprising than the Puritans of Massachusetts and were just as ardent in defending their principles, and an excuse for what seems like a belated adoption of printing is supplied by the fact that they

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arrived in America later than the other colonizing groups. The Quakers were in reality quick to perceive the vital importance of this still relatively new instrument of civilization, and lost little time in putting it to work. Philadelphia possessed a press as early as 1685, within two years of the founding of the colony by William Penn in 1683. The printer in charge of this first press was William Bradford, and in no other American city is the history of printing introduced by a more glorious name.

Distinguished as much by the length as by the brilliance of his services, he will ever be numbered among those who have added highest lustre to the whole profession of printing in America. But he was only able to practice his art in peace at Philadelphia for a relatively short time, and after seven years of labour at his press, which should have brought him a different reward, he was overwhelmed by an outburst of intolerance. Leaving the ungrateful city at once, Bradford transferred his activities to New York, and his subsequent career is enough to show what injury Philadelphia inflicted upon itself in forcing him to depart. He, however, left behind him one of his sons, Andrew, and between that time and 1791, three generations of Bradfords upheld the reputation which William had originally attached to the name.

Philadelphia never lacked for printers after Bradford's time, but here it is only necessary to mention Samuel Keimer, David Hall, Chris-

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topher Sower, Henry Miller and John Dunlap, these being among the most prominent craftsmen of this opening period. There is one, however, who must be placed in a niche apart and of whom it can be said that he overtopped all the rest. This was the illustrious Benjamin Franklin. After having made his debut as a printer in Boston at a very tender age, serving first as an apprentice and later, if certain evidence is correct, as a master printer under the rather rough direction of his brother, James, Benjamin moved to Philadelphia, and before very long had succeeded in establishing himself there on his own account. In a few years, we find him at the head of both an important printing shop and a flourishing book shop. His famous *Poor Richard's Almanacks* had a sale of more than ten thousand copies, and the spirit which he infused into the *Pennsylvania Gazette* was such that it continues to exist today, after two hundred years, under the name of the *Saturday Evening Post*. He was animated by the highest professional standards and he contributed more than any other person of his time to the advancement of the typographic art in Philadelphia. Certain publications of his, for example, the justly famous *Cato Major of Cicero* in which he himself took such pride, would still do honour to the much better-equipped printers of the present time. Franklin was perhaps not less a great printer for being also a great publicist and a great inventor. Even after public life had claimed his

A  
COLLECTION  
OF ALL THE  
**L A W S**  
Of the PROVINCE of  
*PENNSYLVANIA:*  
NOW IN FORCE.

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*Published by Order of ASSEMBLY*

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*PHILADELPHIA:*  
Printed and Sold by B. FRANKLIN.  
M,DCC,XLII.

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Benjamin Franklin's judgment in the choice of type faces and his taste in typography, as well as his skill in presswork, greatly influenced the trend of printing in North America.

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entire energy, he never ceased to show a most lively interest in the profession which he loved so well. He invoked it even in the celebrated epitaph which he composed for himself:

THE BODY OF  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
PRINTER

(LIKE THE COVER OF AN OLD BOOK,  
ITS CONTENTS WORN OUT,  
AND STRIPT OF ITS LETTERING AND GILDING,)  
LIES HERE, FOOD FOR WORMS.  
YET THE WORK ITSELF SHALL NOT BE LOST  
FOR IT WILL, AS HE BELIEVED, APPEAR ONCE  
MORE IN A NEW AND MORE BEAUTIFUL EDITION  
CORRECTED AND AMENDED  
BY ITS AUTHOR

It is now time to consider what part was played by the New York colonies in the introduction of printing into America. The truth is that New York had no press until 1693. In these times one can scarcely understand how a colony, whose great destiny was already foreshadowed by the enterprising spirit of its inhabitants, could wait so long before harnessing the tremendous power of the press to its own uses. Many reasons have been advanced for New York's backwardness, of which the most credible is that the Royal Government of that time systematically opposed the introduction of printing, not caring to furnish in any

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manner or form a means by which the popular will could be expressed.

Governor Lovelace, it is true, had proposed the establishment of an official press in 1668, but he advanced his suggestion timidly and no attention was paid to it. New York did not see its first press until twenty-five years later, and then only thanks to a singular combination of circumstances. William Bradford, the Philadelphia printer of whom we have already spoken, and who by this time had been released from the prison wherein the religious faction opposed to him had confined him, but had not yet gained possession of his arbitrarily confiscated press and type, about the end of 1692, thought of coming to New York in order to seek justice from Benjamin Fletcher, who was Governor of both Pennsylvania and New York. Fletcher at this time happened to be conducting a military campaign against Canada, and was exceedingly proud of the role he was playing. Dreaming of perpetuating the memory of this exploit in print for posterity, he regarded the meeting with Bradford as providential. He at once offered to redress the injury done Bradford, but on the condition that the latter should follow him to New York. The Quaker, already bitter against his fellow citizens, hardly needed to be beseeched, and in 1693 we find him already occupied with his new duties at New York, working for a salary of forty pounds a year. One of his first concerns was to satisfy the vanity of his new patron, and in this same

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year, 1693, he produced the famous *Narrative of an attempt made by the French of Canada upon the Mohaques Country*. To-day this work is among the rarest examples of American historical literature. Bradford, however, gave other early proofs of his activity. The Bulletin of the New York Public Library was able, not very long ago, to present a list of thirty-eight publications which issued from Bradford's shop during the twelve months immediately following his arrival in New York. Such a list of work accomplished in this short time is enough to show us that the sum total of his productions must have been imposing. For thirty years he was the only printer in New York. For another twenty years, although he worked in competition with other printers, he continued to produce work that set the standard for his rivals. When he died in 1752, at the truly patriarchal age of ninety-four, he had not been in retirement more than seven or eight years.

William Bradford's first competitor in New York was John Peter Zenger, who arrived in New York about 1726. This German printer had a strong political bias to his character and was inclined to be rather quarrelsome. These characteristics contributed to make him a sort of stormy petrel in the history of New York printing. He began by engaging in an open contest with Bradford, setting up the *New York Weekly Journal* in opposition to the *New York Gazette*, which Bradford had founded;

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but having attacked the government, Zenger ended by spending several months in prison as a reward for his temerity.

After Bradford and Zenger, Hugh Gainé, James Rivington, John Holt and a few other New York printers gained considerable prominence in their profession, but they can hardly be said to belong to the adolescent period of printing in that city, and to afford them any considerable space would be going outside the necessarily close-bound limits which we have set for ourselves.

In connection with the difficulties which attended the introduction of printing in New York, we have alluded to the scant sympathy accorded it by the authorities of that time. Nothing better illustrates this singular attitude of mind than the case of Virginia. In 1671, nearly sixty years after the foundation of the colony, Sir William Berkeley, the governor, who had thirty-eight years of experience behind him, wrote the following lines in a letter which he addressed to the authorities of the Colonial Office at London:

"I thank God we have not free schools nor printing; and I hope we shall not have these hundred years. For learning has brought disobedience and heresy, and sects into the world; and printing has divulged them and libels against the government. God keep us from both."

It appears then that Sir William Berkeley

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banished printers from his colony for the same reasons which made Plato banish poets from his Republic! Berkeley, however, died or was replaced a few years after he had given vent to his astounding declaration, and about 1681, under a new regime, a certain John Buckner thought the time opportune to bring his press into Virginia. He began his career there by printing the laws of that year, a thing little less than revolutionary for that period and place. His daring had a lively effect upon the people in general and upon the authorities in particular. The stand was taken that printing was forbidden in Virginia, and Governor Culpeper immediately had the culprit brought before him. The strict command was given Buckner that nothing was to be printed in Virginia, except that for which His Majesty's permission had been definitely secured, and he was forced to give bond to the amount of a hundred pounds as a guarantee of his compliance with the order. The Governor at once submitted the troublous case to the home authorities. The answer did not arrive until 1683, two years later, and was in the form of royal instructions to Lord Effingham, who had succeeded Lord Culpeper. These instructions expressly set forth that the governor should not permit "anyone to use a printing press, no matter what reason or occasion should arise." The infiltration of modern views into Virginia was very slow, and it was fifty years before another press was brought into the colony. In

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1736, William Parks, a printer from Annapolis in Maryland, arrived with his press, and as it is hardly right to consider the fleeting career of John Buckner's press in 1681 as being a true beginning, it is really from this time that the introduction of printing should be dated in the country of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, a new conception of liberty had made too much headway for any barrier to be raised capable of stopping the all-conquering march of the printing press. One after the other, all the established colonies succumbed before it. The following table, which shows the names of the first printers and the date of the introduction of printing into each of the thirteen original states of the American Republic, will no doubt interest the reader.

Colony	Town	Printer	Date
Massachusetts	Cambridge	Stephen Daye	1639
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	William Bradford	1685
New York	New York	William Bradford	1693
Connecticut	New London	Thomas Short	1709
Maryland	Annapolis	William Parks	1726
South Carolina	Charleston	Eleanor Philipps	1730
Rhode Island	Newport	James Franklin	1732
Virginia	Williambourg	William Parks	1736
North Carolina	New Berne	James Davis	1749
New Jersey	Woodbridge	James Parker	1751
New Hampshire	Portsmouth	Daniel Fowle	1756
Delaware	Wilmington	James Adams	1761
Georgia	Savannah	James Johnston	1762

Only Louisiana remains to be considered of all those sections of Eastern America which were sufficiently colonized at that time to justify the introduction of a printing press.

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Thomas believed that printing did not begin there until after the acquisition of the territory by the Washington Government in 1804. The truth is, however, that printed matter had been turned out in Louisiana near the end of the French regime. We now know of a little work, entitled *Lettre d'un officier de la Louisiane à M. . . commissaire de la Marine*, which was printed in Louisiana in 1764. It is interesting to note that this lampoon brought its author, the Chevalier de Rocheblave, several months of imprisonment in the Bastille.

Printing was not inaugurated in some parts of what is now the United States until about the middle of the last century. The printing press could not keep pace with the march of civilization into the West, and we have thus an explanation for the fact that the first printing press did not reach St. Louis until around 1808, and Detroit until 1809. These were introduced as a result of the good offices of the famous Abbe Gabriel Richard.

On the far-off coast of the Pacific, in the territory which is now California, it seems certain that the first printing was done at Monterey in 1833, by the Spaniards, who had originally come from Mexico, and who were still masters of the country. This Monterey press was seized by the Americans in 1846 directly after the conquest, and in the following year another press was set up at San Francisco. Printing thus completed its conquest of America and linked the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

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Nothing now remains for us but to glance briefly at the physical and psychological conditions faced and overcome by those printing pioneers whose careers we have sketched. When we see the difficulties they encountered, the obstacles they overcame, the injustices visited upon them and the few advantages they reaped, we shall respect their memories the more. We are harvesting to-day in ease and liberty the flowers grown from the seeds which they sowed at the cost of incalculable sacrifice and effort.

There is a very rare engraving by Philippe Galle, dating from the end of the sixteenth century, which shows the interior of a Dutch printing house. The printers, sword at side, are dressed in the style of the gentlemen of that day, with nicely laundered cravats, doublets of rich cloth, high boots with ribands and embroideries, and they are comfortably seated on stools provided with soft cushions. Nothing resembles less the interior of a typical printing house in America in 1640, or even around 1700. To a Stephen Daye, for example, no opportunity ever came to work in such sybaritic surroundings. If he carried side-arms at all, it was not a dress-sword, but rather a blunderbuss to defend himself against the savage Indians of the neighbourhood who, even in comparatively civilized Cambridge, might at any moment invade his shop and take his scalp. The life which Stephen Daye led was the rude life of the colonists of that early time,

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passed in a New World in which the most ordinary necessities of existence, which are today the lot of even the most humble, were lacking.

The actual printing itself was carried on under very disadvantageous conditions, with the crudest of equipment, and very often without the equipment the printers had was far from complete. Even late in the eighteenth century there were no type foundries or paper mills on this continent, and the printer was forced to send to far-away England for his stock of paper and his type. The time involved, as well as the question of cost, therefore contributed largely to the printer's difficulties. When we are tempted to pass harsh judgment upon the mistakes present in the somewhat defaced productions of our early printers, or to smile at the evident crudities, we have but to recall the poor instruments which force of circumstances compelled them to use. We should then admire at their true worth the industry and application they showed, for they lacked those marvelous automatic presses of the present time, which produce more than 100,000 pages of printed matter in an hour. Even the press which Benjamin Franklin used around 1740, was not appreciably different from that used by the earlier printers of the end of the sixteenth century. It was worked entirely by hand and could not make more than two hundred or three hundred impressions in an hour. One man was required to ink the forms, while

another operated the lever. In the last analysis, the work of printing was as laborious as it was poorly paid.

But the psychological conditions governing the work of our pioneer printers were perhaps more deplorable still. They lived at a time which we cannot judge properly by present-day standards. Liberty was truly in fetters then. A printer, who was not a simple wage-earner in the employ of the Government was by that very fact a libeller and a fomenter of discords. All inclination to express an opinion on a matter of public concern was effectively stifled by the authorities. Religious intolerance was perhaps even worse in the numerous theocratic communities which then abounded in the newly founded colonies. It fared ill with the printer whose beliefs did not happen to coincide with those of the most powerful faction.

When Samuel Green, at Cambridge in 1667, began to print the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, he was immediately denounced to the Assembly of Elders, and this severe tribunal rendered the following judgment after deep deliberation:

"This Court being informed that there is now in the Presse reprinting a book that imitates Christ, or to that purpose, written by Thomas à Kempis, a popish minister, wherein is contayned some things that are less safe to be infused among the people of this place, Doe commend it to the licensers of the Presse the more full revisal thereof and that in the mean-

time there be no further progresse in that work."

This occurred twenty-five years after John Milton had flung into the face of the world his immortal appeal for freedom of the press, in his famous *Areopagitica*. Obviously, the seeds which he sowed had not yet sprouted.

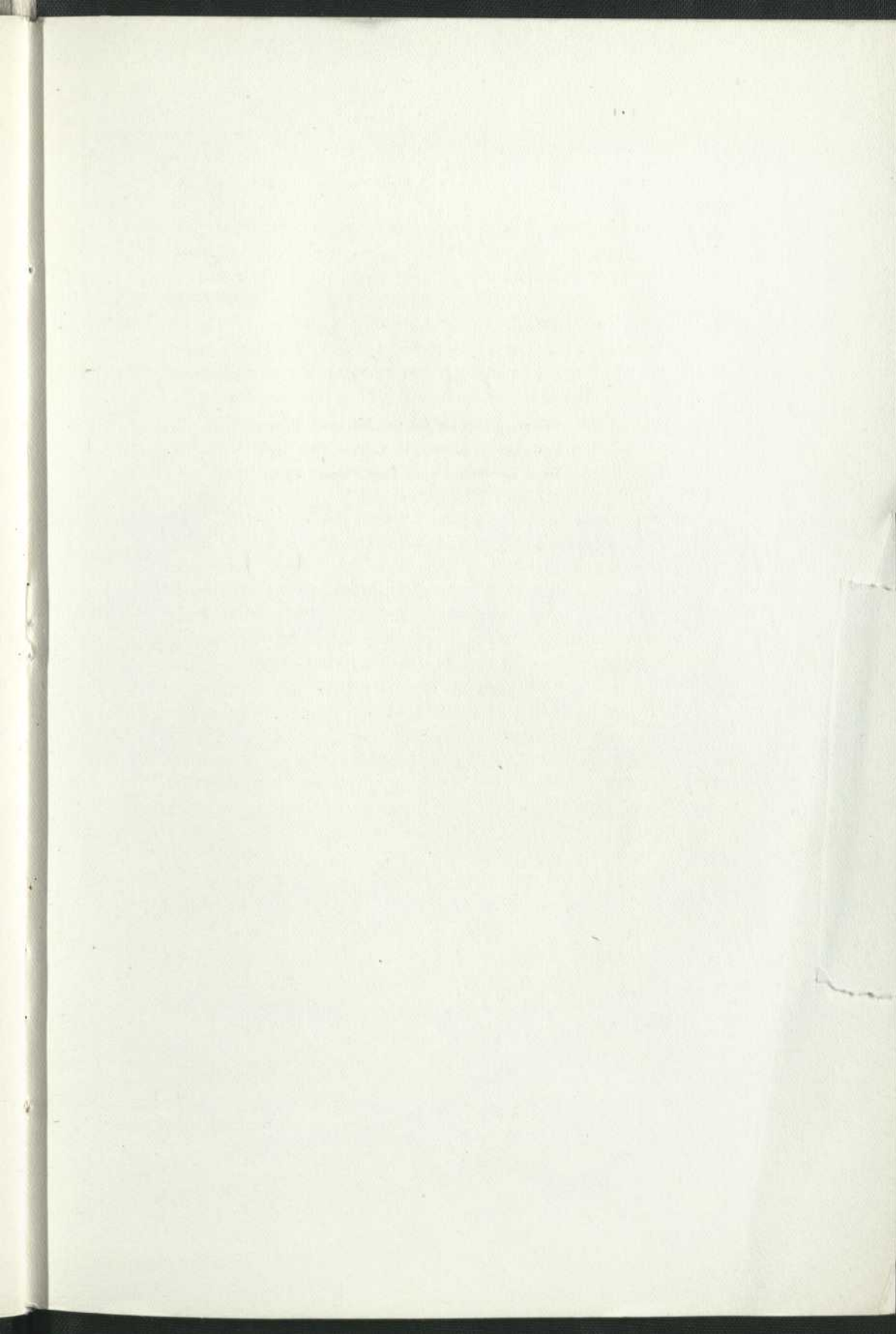
If a printer dared to display even a little independence of spirit—and a great number of printers were not wanting in this quality—he was singled out to be fined and even imprisoned. The martyrology of American printers is almost as imposing as that of their European confreres. We already know of the tribulations visited upon William Bradford, how he was thrown into irons in 1692, by his fellow Quakers because of a difference in religious opinion, and we also know of the misadventures of John Peter Zenger, to whom one small but lively criticism of the government in 1733, brought long months of imprisonment in New York. We can likewise learn how James Franklin, brother of the celebrated statesman, was imprisoned at Boston in 1722, for a crime not a whit more serious, and only obtained his liberty when he promised to cease publication of his newspaper, the *New England Courant*.

Under this twofold trial of physical conditions which handicapped their efforts, and of an atmosphere of intolerance which constantly exposed their enterprises to sudden ruin, we can readily understand that our pioneer printers rarely accumulated fortunes. Most of them

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were able to bequeath their children only the barest necessities of life. It may well be said that certain printers owed their poverty to some weakness in themselves or to bad management of their affairs, but for the most part their poverty can be accounted for by the harshness of the times in which Providence had ordained they should live, by the culpable indifference of even those very people whom the printers nourished so generously with intellectual fare, and by the injustices inflicted upon them by tyrannical authorities. Such poverty is an honour, not a disgrace. For this reason, our early printers have a right to our respect, just as for so many other reasons, they have an inalienable right to be remembered by us. For us they ate the bitter bread of troubles and vicissitudes that were their portion in the opening and middle periods of printing in America. It is to their eternal merit that they not only lighted, but managed to keep alight, at a cost of the hardest labour, in times of stress and danger, that torch which to-day illuminates our land with so brilliant a glow—the torch of Printing.

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