

The American Bookmaker.

A JOURNAL OF TECHNICAL ART AND INFORMATION,

— FOR —

PUBLISHERS, BOOKBINDERS, PRINTERS, LITHOGRAPHERS, BLANK BOOK MANUFACTURERS AND ALL OTHERS CONNECTED WITH OR INTERESTED IN BOOKMAKING.

VOL. VIII.

NEW YORK, JANUARY, 1889.

No. 1.



CONSTANTINE SCHUBERT.

THE CULTIVATION of taste and the rapid advancement of art as applied to our great industries have encouraged a demand for artists and their work far above the number and capacity of those engaged in this profession.

But the ability of our people to rise equal to emergencies is shown here, for with the advancement of taste in art industry, and especially in the making of

books, young men have risen in the larger cities all over the country—young men with rare talent and application—to meet this occasion.

The surprising feature in all this work is that the standard reached by our young artists is so high, because the facilities for study are remarkably few. We have schools, it is true, but the young artist soon rises above the level of these, if he ever gets the chance to attend them. We have, here and there, an artists' club, but even these are rarely available. Our great school has been the workshop and the few excellent European art publications accessible. The privileges enjoyed by the art student in New York are scanty; he has no opportunity to develop his genius and talent. Genius he has, for this is shown in the fact that he has three times in two years won the prize in the *École Nationale des Beaux Arts*, at Paris, which is the finest school for the arts in the world. The opportunities afforded the student in Paris are immeasurably superior to those of any country; here he is not obliged to spend a year or two in drawing from inanimate objects before entering the classes from life; there is easy access to all of the wonderful museums and libraries and continual expositions of all kinds, and, finally, as a crowning privilege, the great yearly Salon.

Here is ground for a comparison between the conditions which prevail as to such privileges for the art student in Paris and in New York.

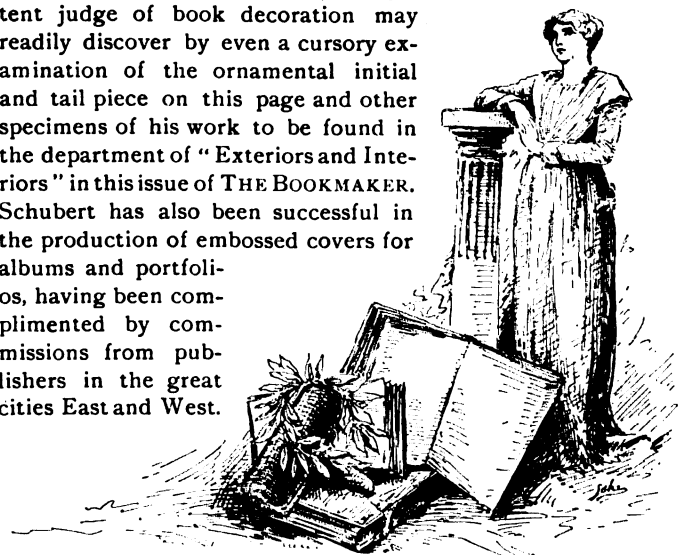
New York is a much younger city, and time will, no doubt, bring greater opportunities for the art student of the future. There are two things which should be encouraged by the community, and those are science and art. Science has received liberal endowments, but art has not been so generally recognized. Science educates the mind and raises the intelligence of the people; art educates the soul and raises the sentiment of the mind, and more especially is this true of art as applied to industry.

But all of the possibilities of the future cannot be of use to the art student of the present. He stands on a level with the pioneers who opened the way into the vast wilderness of the West, where great cities now flourish.

Among these pioneers of art we have Rhead, Blashfield, Ed-

wards, Davidson, Myrick, Dewson, Halm, &c., sketches of whose careers have been given from time to time in these pages. And to these may be added the name of Constantine Schubert, a young artist who has during the past few years done much to elevate the tone of book cover designs, and who has made much use of the few opportunities which have come within his reach.

Apprenticed at the age of fourteen to L. Klaebisch, probably one of the largest engraving establishments of its kind in New York at that time, he soon rose to be one of the best engravers in the shop. About the same time he entered Cooper Institute, where he devoted himself entirely to art, and for three years stood at the head of the different classes which he attended. He afterward applied to the National Academy of Design, and after being admitted found it impossible to attend, having been offered a position in the shop of Wm. H. Cantlin, of Philadelphia, the successor of Copper & Fry, which is the oldest engraving house in the United States and was first organized by Mr. Baldwin, of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, of that city. But he did not neglect his favorite study. After having traveled about in the larger cities and held positions in the best workshops he established himself in business in 1882, and met with immediate success. The business grew so rapidly that Mr. Schubert associated himself with a partner, E. J. Kaltenbach, who had been for many years with Benedict Brothers, on Broadway. Mr. Kaltenbach retired from the firm of C. Schubert & Co. last year, leaving Mr. Schubert alone in control of the business. Mr. Schubert has done much to improve the tone of book cover designs, and his work may be seen on the books of the leading publishers of the country. He is not yet thirty years of age, and much may be expected from this promising young artist, as any competent judge of book decoration may readily discover by even a cursory examination of the ornamental initial and tail piece on this page and other specimens of his work to be found in the department of "Exteriors and Interiors" in this issue of *THE BOOKMAKER*. Schubert has also been successful in the production of embossed covers for albums and portfolios, having been complimented by commissions from publishers in the great cities East and West.



TAIL PIECE.

Specially Designed for *THE BOOKMAKER* by C. SCHUBERT, New York.



PUNCH CUTTING.

PERHAPS nothing is enveloped in more mystery to the average printer than the method of cutting the original punches of type. He sees that fashion after fashion succeeds, as it does in millinery, but he does not know who originates the new styles nor how they are made realities. If he refers to the text books, the manuals of printing, they say little. Fournier is perhaps the most explicit, but he wrote in 1825, and while the plan used then is still in vogue there are a number of points not cleared up.

The origination of a style is due to the letter cutter. He may perhaps have received his inspiration from something that he saw painted or engraved, or from some previous type which is susceptible of alteration, but to him is due the reduction of the idea to form. Taking the theory thus he draws six, eight or ten letters on a piece of paper, which then form his basis. These drawings are usually three line pica in size, as being easy to see and large enough to complete the details. Many letter cutters do not finish these entirely, as they would do for letters which were to be engraved on a plate, but only give a bare outline, and there are punch makers who do not even have a drawing. They depend upon their eyes, and upon minute callipers and dividers. No cutter at the present time resorts to great mathematical diagrams, divided off as a map of the world would be upon Mercator's projection, with lines running both ways. Tory, one maker, 200 years ago, divided the space for a full bodied letter, or one which filled up the whole body, from top to bottom, into 100 subdivisions; Jageon, another French designer of letters, had 2,000 sections. The practical punch cutter of that day, however, for whom he worked, refused to adopt his diagram and continued to work by the eye, as he had before. Moxon, whose "Mechanick's Exercises" are now just about two hundred years old, divided the height of the body into forty-two parts, the bottom of the capitals being twelve parts above the extreme lower point.

The lower case m and capital H are the standards for a font, and are the first letters made. The former should be exactly in the centre, just as much space being below as above. With the scale as Moxon had it, the lower shoulder then would be twelve parts, the upper shoulder twelve parts, and the character in eighteen parts. Thus more than half the space was unused. In width the face might be, using the same scale for breadth as for height, twenty-five, thirty or thirty-five sections broad. This width is determined by the idea which governs making the font. Supposing that it is a roman, it may be a large face, a medium face or a small face; it can be very wide, wide, medium, thin or very thin, and there may be either heavy or light strokes. Other modifications might be suggested, but these are enough. In the design of the character m all of these points must be taken into consideration. The distance between each of the arms of the letter and the weight of the strokes and hair strokes being given, and the height determined, enough must be left at each side and at the bottom and top for the serifs, the projections at the end. The punch resembles a type, but is larger and longer, and slopes

down to the end, which is just the size of the face proposed. It is made of soft steel, so that the tools can operate upon it more easily, and after the character is complete it is hardened, so that it can be used as a stamp for a matrix. The implements used are those of a steel engraver, and are necessarily very small at the point. Some of the places they have to cut out are less than a hundredth of an inch in width.

The letter m having been cut first at the top and bottom, so that the black portion comes exactly in the centre, and from the sides enough being taken to allow room for the projecting serifs, these latter are then made, and the hollow places are cut out of the centre. Minute gauges and callipers are used to determine these points. Then the H is made, and afterward the n, u and other square bodied letters which neither rise nor fall below the line. The letter o is the standard for the round letters, and is the first of them to be made. Then the ascending and descending letters, the capitals, small capitals, points, reference marks, figures and other characters are taken up in turn. In all these amount to more than two hundred in a complete font of roman and italic, but the reference marks and some others can be and are generally saved from other fonts. But there are many difficulties in the way of making a fine face. A high artistic sense is needed. While the characters must resemble each other in many particulars, in others they may be unlike. There is no rule, for instance, for making a lower case g. There is a loop at the head and one at the foot, but they may be very small or very large, or close together or far apart. For making these round or oval hollows, or, in fact, any hollows where this contrivance can be used, it is common to have a counter punch. It would take considerable time to dig out a true circle or oval, but to cut away from a piece of steel enough to leave what remains perfectly round is easy. When this is done it is hardened, placed in the proper position and driven in, not, however, to any very great depth. The remainder is chiseled out in a sloping way, so as to give support to the edge.

The work is done with the punch securely clamped or held in a vise, a magnifying glass being used, which makes the letters look 2 or 3 inches high. Comparison with the letters previously made must continually go on, for, while the new character may be symmetrical, it may not match those first prepared. In addition to all of the inspection that can be given to the punch the work is verified by a smoke proof, a time honored custom, which is still continued and which dates back to the beginning of the art. The punch is put in the flame of a candle, which covers it with smoke, and with this smoke as a substitute for printer's ink, from which it differs in having no oily portion, the artist takes a proof on a card. This brings out with the greatest clearness the fat and the thin strokes of the letter. "This proof," says Fournier, "is called a *fumé*. The engraver should make at first a proof of each letter singly, in order to correct the imperfections of detail, and afterward a general proof of all the characters, to lighten or fatten the letters, which may be too heavy or too light, and to correct other faults seen when together."

These faults are much more common than are known and add much to the expense of making a font. In a script lately made in this city some characters were engraved a dozen times, and one of the best letter cutters in America, when first imported from the other side, from which he received good recommendations, cut a series of characters in which two out of three had to be thrown aside. The art is very difficult. Fournier remarks that the "labor of the engraver is without contradiction, of all those which join in bookmaking, that of which the execution requires the most special talent and of which the skillful results procure most justly for their author the honorable title of artist. To engage in this kind of engraving it is necessary to be endowed with great accuracy of eye, for it is by sight alone that faults are redressed."